



An Inquisitive Family Party.

A RIDE THROUGH HOSTILE AFRICA,

WITH

ADVENTURES AMONG THE BOERS.

BY

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"ADVENTURES IN MANY LANDS," "PRAIRIE FARMS AND
PRAIRIE FOLKS," "ACCESSIBLE FIELD SPORTS,"
"GUN, ROD, AND SADDLE," ETC. ETC. ETC.

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H. R. H. The Prince of Wales.

P R E F A C E.

THESE experiences are taken from the Diary of my journey into Far Bechuana Land, when in the service of the Imperial Government, during the late Zulu war. The object of my mission was to obtain, if possible, natives to assist in the transport of the army.

As I have been quite an invalid since my return to England, I have obtained assistance in preparing this work from my old friend Mr. Walter Goodall, to whom I here tender my sincere thanks.

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“ON DUTY.”

A RIDE THROUGH HOSTILE AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL.

DOUBTLESS for many years to come it will remain a subject of dispute, whether the annexation of the Transvaal was right or wrong. Those who hold the latter view, I am inclined to believe, are ignorant of the circumstances which transpired among its Boer population previous to the date when Sir Theophilus Shepstone raised the British flag, to indicate to all beholders that this distant region in the interior of South Africa had been adopted by the mother country, and from that day forth owed its allegiance to Great Britain.

My reason for asserting that the enemies to annexation were ignorant, arises from the circumstance that I travelled through the country a year previous to the time when it was decided that the Boers were unable and incapable of self-government; and I am convinced that no man with an ordinary amount of knowledge of the world, and

gifted with even a limited stock of common sense, could fail to see that the constitution of this little Republic was rotten at the core, and that it was only a matter of months—nay, possibly weeks, before it would be invaded by hostile tribes of natives, whom it could not oppose, and who would massacre, regardless of age or sex, all of European descent who might fall into their hands.

A person would imagine that, with such certain destruction threatening it, the inhabitants would have stood together determined to fight or die in defence of their adopted land. But such was not the case; for politics, that bugbear of all new governments, had created three different factions among the people, each of which had a candidate for the Presidency at the coming election, whom they were determined should be returned in spite of all opposition.

During my sojourn among the Boers at that date, I have frequently asked members of the Transvaal population, What would they do, in case the candidate they had selected for the presidential chair should be defeated, when the result of the ballot should become known?

The reply invariably was, "Take to our rifles, and fight it out."

From this it will be seen that anarchy was rife, weakening to a minimum a population which at the best of times could scarcely hold its own against the aboriginal races that surrounded it.

It was about this date—viz. four years ago—

that it was decided by the Boer authorities, then presided over by Mr. Burgers, that they should chastise Secocoeni, an adjoining chief, who, they asserted, had become "cheeky."

To carry out this purpose all available men throughout the territory were *commandered*.

The novelty of the war, particularly as the enemy were black, made it most popular; and little difficulty was experienced in obtaining what was considered a sufficient number of levies to conduct it to a successful termination. But the descendants of Holland had calculated without their host, and firmly believed that the same invariable success granted to their forefathers, in nearly every engagement which had taken place between them and the native tribes, would be accorded to the present generation.

It never appears to have arisen in their minds that, in the sundry engagements fought by the past generation, their progenitors possessed fire-arms—weapons which their opponents were destitute of at that period—but that now not only were their coloured antagonists provided with them, but also are thoroughly cognizant of their use.

I had arrived *en route* from the interior at Klerksdorp. Numbers of these embryo soldiers were halted at this village to rest themselves, previous to their march to Pretoria. Drinking-bouts and shooting-matches apparently were the favourite amusements of all; thus bottle after

bottle of boer brandy was consumed, and as each flask was emptied, it was set up at a distance of a hundred yards, as a target for the votaries of Bacchus to fire at.

The precision of their aim was fairly good; and when the mark was shattered by a hit, a chorus of voices would ejaculate, "There goes another nigger!"

A solitary Briton, I stood amongst this crowd; and doubtless from my unprotected position many a word of chaff or sly innuendo was pointed at me. At length a Boer, who spoke English perfectly, informed me, in answer to an inquiry I made, that the boys were only remarking, that if the redcoats had another war with them they would treat them very much in the same fashion as they were treating the unfortunate bottles! At this I smiled, and begged him to communicate to his companions that I had a high opinion of their marksmanship, but doubted very much if they would hold their rifles as straight had the black bottle but a similar weapon pointed at them!

Bunkum and braggadocia predominated among these fellows. Their manner was all smoke and no fire; and inwardly I felt, although I did not express it, that when the day arrived for their courage to be tested, the majority would be found singularly deficient in that necessary virtue, without which no war can ever be carried to a successful termination. Not many weeks after-

the above episode, Mr. Burgers, then president, had addressed them, and upbraided them as cowards; and the force which had assembled to humble Secocoeni had dissolved, like snow before the sun, and was scattered over the land, each individual which had helped to compose it having returned to his homestead or the domicile of his parents.

At this date I returned to England.

Among my fellow-passengers were several leading Cape politicians, also Sir Theophilus Shepstone. When I told the former that I felt convinced the Boers would be worsted in their present war, they invariably differed from me in opinion, for they would answer, "The Boers have always beaten the natives, and therefore will do so again!" The latter gentleman, however, listened to my arguments, said little, but, I have no doubt, thought the more.

I cannot say I like the Boer, and I am unwilling that this should be put down to prejudice, as many would imagine. For has not one of our most popular writers, who travelled from Natal to Pretoria, thence to the diamond-fields and the coast, strictly adhering to the post route, and obtaining his information from the canteen keepers, hotel keepers, *et hoc genus omne*, lately written that they were 'an innate race of gentlemen'? But if so, their qualifications to that appellation differ widely from what I have always understood the term to mean. Let the

reader judge for himself, when I fearlessly state that the Boers are dirty, ignorant, inhospitable, prejudiced, and cowardly; and I may add, that except upon rare occasions, indolent in the extreme. But one virtue they possess, and that is their love of wife and children. The former I have frequently imagined to be dictated more by jealousy than the holier sentiment of natural affection, as they invariably give indication to every male visitor that they suspect him to possess less morality than they credit to themselves. Of course, however, there are exceptions to every rule, and the educated and travelled Boer is the ‘biggest’ exception to his countrymen that can be imagined. I have heard people assert—persons who love the Boer—that they were the best pioneers to civilization that the world knows. This I deny, for they are no more to be compared to the descendants of Great Britain, who were the forerunners of civilization in North America, than are the original missionaries who were digested by the Fiji islanders, to the more recent adventurers, who instituted by force the first educational practices of civilization.

Revenons à nos moutons !

Not long after this Sir Theophilus Shepstone returned to South Africa, and becoming aware of the danger that the inhabitants of the Transvaal Republic ran of being utterly exterminated, he proceeded at once to their capital, and to prevent a massacre, which doubtless would have taken

place, raised the British flag, and annexed the country to England, thus declaring that all who invaded the land would be considered and treated as enemies of our Imperial Government. That this was necessary cannot for a moment be denied, by even those most determined to cavil at our policy, when they are informed that the treasury of the republic was empty, and scarcely a soldier remained to enable it to make even a feeble resistance against a much less powerful force than that which would have been brought in opposition to them.

Within the last few months I have heard persons in South Africa say, that the grand mistake we made in reference to the annexation of the Transvaal was, that we did not permit the native hordes to invade the country; for that after the savages had ravaged the land with fire and assegai, the survivors would most assuredly have anxiously sought our protection, and been for ever after grateful for the aid we had afforded them in their hour of tribulation.

But would such a cold-blooded and calculating policy have been the duty of a Christian people? or could we have hoped for a blessing at the hands of the Supreme Power, had we delayed the needful succour to so late a period? No! emphatically, no! further adding, in my belief—the belief of one who knows the country—the action of Sir Theophilus Shepstone neither occurred too soon nor too late, and that the

course he adopted was dictated by the purest and most unselfish motives, a proof of his knowledge and appreciation of the people he dealt with.

Now that the Transvaal has become a part of Her Gracious Majesty's dominions, I would take this opportunity of chronicling my opinion—an opinion formed upon personal experience obtained during a lengthened sojourn within its limits—that this country has before it a future more glorious than by any possibility it could have attained under its former circumstances and government.

Two months ago I stood in the streets of Porchesbroom, and travelled from it many, many miles in different directions; and so great are the changes that have taken place, that the person who knew it four years since would not recognize it now. For why? the land that was once barren and unproductive veldt, has in many places become cultivated; and where the wild laugh of the jackal and doleful note of the hyæna were heard, the bleating of sheep and goats, with the lowing of cattle, greet the ear.

If in so short a space of time such changes have been made, what may not be in store for this favoured land in the illimitable ages of futurity?

CHAPTER II.

FELLOW-PASSENGERS.

THE Transvaal is bounded on the west and north-west by Great Bechuana Land, a country equal in extent to France and Spain combined. Its people are called Bechuanas, have a strong resemblance to each other, and possess the same superstitions, legendary stories, and religious ceremonies. This nation is not governed by one monarch, but by a number of chiefs, the principals of whom rule over no less than from 100,000 to 150,000 subjects. Their villages are generally denominated by the traders "stations," many of which have a population of 20,000 or 30,000 souls. They possess large herds of cattle, numerous horses, and cultivate mealies and kaffir corn to a considerable extent. Polygamy is universally practised among them, and the wives not only perform all domestic labour, but cultivate the soil, their lords and masters considering it beneath their dignity to perform manual labour; nevertheless they are indefatigable hunters, and most expert makers of

carosses. Rather strange, and exactly opposed to European ideas, is it not? the males sitting at home the live-long day, sewing together the various skins they have obtained, while the females go forth, with their hoe upon their shoulder at early morn, to till the land. Yet the men of this nation can work—aye and work hard if they choose, for it is from this race that the Diamond-fields are supplied with the greater number of their workmen.

From this nation it was that the Boers of the Transvaal formerly procured their slaves. The *modus operandi* was simplicity itself. Half-a-dozen farmers of the late Republic required additional folks (for by this name they designate their slaves), so they picked a quarrel with the head of a kraal, asserting that some action or assertion of his had insulted them; so, as reparation, they attacked the village by night, shot a few of the mature or aged men, and carried off into captivity as many children as they desired. If the hills, koppies, and kloofs of western Transvaal could speak, they could tell of tragedies as cold-blooded and demoniac as ever occurred in any other part of the earth.

At the same time one cannot feel much pity for the Bechuanas, when one learns that they are slave-holders themselves, and have been from time immemorial, and that they are the hardest task-masters that can be imagined. The few white men that visit this distant region see or

know nothing of the existence of this institution among them, for the victims are kept out upon the Kalihari desert, toiling day and night, enduring, unsheltered, every variation of temperature, to procure for their masters ivory, skins, and feathers. These unfortunate beings that are thus employed generally belong to the Bushman tribe, a race which, with the exception of the Digger Indians of the Rocky Mountains, may be considered the lowest in the scale of the human family.

The country of the Bechuanas is, generally speaking, flat table-land, the elevation of which is almost 5000 feet above sea level. However, these plains are in portions intersected by mountain ridges of considerable elevation, while koppies—a solitary excrescence from the surface of the plain, regular in outlines, although composed of a jumble of gigantic fragments of rock—are ever in sight after the 27° of latitude is passed. The vegetation naturally in so extensive a tract of country varies; in the south the veldt is covered with the ivory needle thorn, but as you progress further towards the equator its place is usurped by mapani brush, a dark green luxuriant shrub, with a very fleshy leaf and destitute of prickles. One species of timber predominates over the whole region, viz., different varieties of the acacia, which in the higher latitudes grows more frequently in clumps, giving a park-like resemblance to the landscape—while to

the north the trees are scattered, giving the scene a much more monotonous appearance. In the spring months of September and October—for the reader must remember we are in the antipodes—grass grows everywhere in the greatest abundance, so much so that cattle may be seen while grazing actually flank deep in its luxuriant vegetation; but later on in the season, the brilliant green which was formerly the dominant colour has given place to the most sombre of russet brown, for the powerful uncompromising sun has scorched the grass to its very roots, and deprived it of every particle of moisture.

The great and insuperable drawback to this country is a want of water; while in no portion of the land abundant, in many parts it is totally devoid of this necessary of life. Rains also are irregular, whole seasons having been known to pass without the fall of a single shower.

At one time game of nearly every description known in South Africa was exceedingly abundant here, but the introduction of fire-arms among the natives has greatly reduced its numbers.

A very few years ago I wandered about the country I have been attempting to describe, and, as my conveyance was a bullock waggon, seldom did I accomplish more than fifteen miles a day, hunting, and hunting alone, being my object; thus I neither excited the jealousy of traders, or the opposition of missionaries. So the former often supplied my wants at reasonable prices,

while the latter introduced me to chiefs, procured veldt for me to shoot upon, and obtained information for my guidance, viz. where the game was principally congregated.

Thus it was that I became acquainted—I may say, intimately so—with many of the chiefs, numbers of the people, and a very great portion of this, comparatively-speaking, little known land.

When the details of the Insanwala disaster reached England, my former military experience and knowledge of South African travel told me at once that the weak point of our army was the transport department; and, after due consideration and thought, I came to the conclusion that from the Bechuanas a number of people could be obtained to act as drivers, forelopers, or in any other capacity in which we might choose to employ them.

This idea I communicated to the authorities. Soon after I was honoured by a command to call at the War Office. At the second interview I was asked would I go to South Africa? Having answered “Yes,” I was dismissed. That evening an impress for my passage was delivered at my lodgings, with orders to report myself to Lord Chelmsford. The next day but one saw me on board the Donald Currie steamship, “Warwick Castle,” cleaving through the muddy water of the Thames on our course to the ocean.

Our passengers were a very mixed lot, I soon discovered. The majority, however, were candi-

dates for military glory, who panted for battle-fields, and never would be satisfied till they had met the formidable Zulu. One evening, between Dartmouth and Madeira, I entered the smoking-room; tobacco smoke was so dense that it was some time before its occupants could be recognized. However, the tenour of their conversation could not for a moment be mistaken, and, to my surprise, I discovered that I was in the midst of, not only the bravest of the brave, but the most learned and positive of critics. Ever after, during the remainder of the voyage, I shunned that room, lest I should be questioned on some intricate solution in drill, or examined on some of the details of Vauban's first system. I shall never forget seeing one of these gentlemen unpack his traps a few days after we started; in one portmanteau he had two distinct sets of uniform, the one of a militia, the other of a volunteer corps. To have got this gentleman's baggage to the front would have taken a buck-waggon and a full span of sixteen oxen. Another of the heroes studied the Infantry Manual morning, noon, and night. I envied the man that he enjoyed that style of literature! One day he left his precious volume in his chair, so I hid it; it was really quite distressing to note with what a hungry look he prowled about, searching for his treasure.

There was also a broth-of-a-boy from the Emerald Island; his stock of reading had evi-

dently been confined to Lever's novels. Judging from his language he had resolved to rival the exploits of Charles O'Malley. Lord bless you ! he did not care what the odds were ; give him but a sabre, and a good horse, he would meet the Zulu ten to one, twenty to one—aye, if needs be, thirty to one ! Two or three nights in succession I drew upon my imagination. I described the Zulu as a giant in size, and the most ferocious and cruel savage in the world ; in fact, I was not prepared to say that he was not actually a cannibal. A day or two before we reached Cape Town, this worthy informed me that he was a married man, that his wife was a lady of fortune, and that, under the circumstances, he did not consider he was justified in running the risks attached to a soldier's life.

When we arrived at Durban, not one of the fire-eaters remained ; the attractions of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth were evidently too great to permit of their leaving them without paying a prolonged visit !

The weather during our voyage was all that the most fastidious could desire. Madeira and Teneriffe were passed in due time, and the long stretch of the Atlantic Ocean entered, that extends almost uninterrupted to the South Pole. Altogether we were rather a slow lot ; the ladies, for there were some of the fair sex on board, did not dovetail. A good deal of this was caused by a newly-married lady, who was young, saucy, and mischief-making.

It was perfectly refreshing to see how she was hated by the others, and really invigorating to hear the spiteful things they said against her; but the little one always paid them off in their own coin.

This young wife had a baby. I am not a judge of babies, but I should not think it much of a baby, as babies go; and I think the majority of the ladies on board were of the same opinion, for they used frequently to utter, when the interesting child was in sight, "Poor thing! poor thing! But what could be expected with such a mother?" After these sweet terms of condolence, a couple would trip up to the mamma, and give her some hints on baby cultivation in general, and on the rearing of this one in particular. Immediately afterwards there would be an angry passage of words, when the belligerents would separate, the parent giving vent to her wrath, the well-wishers of the little innocent groaning over the degeneration of the girls of the period.

On the twenty-second day from Dartmouth we were safely moored in the dock at Cape Town; and, although we had a lot of squalls on ship-board, nothing approaching a breeze had we while traversing the mighty ocean.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAPE.

CAPE TOWN ! often as I have visited you, yet am I not prepared to say whether I admire you or otherwise ! Like Constantinople, Naples, and other cities I wot of, when beheld from the sea your appearance is charming ; for the numerous buildings which line the shores of the bay are invariably sparkling white, with an abundance of the greenest trees cropping up in every direction among the various edifices. Table Mountain, which backs the landscape, is of itself a wondrous sight ; in outline and characteristics nothing can be imagined more suitable for the barrier which terminates the old continent to prevent the ingress of the pathless ocean. In the old Titan days of fire and force, before the flood, when all this world was young, we could imagine these herculean beings labouring to construct such a wall to repel the power of the waves and winds. When the sun at evening is about to dip the western horizon, his golden light appears to be reflected from every rock and cranny, and to sparkle with the brilliancy of innumerable gems.

To the southward of Table Mountain is situated the lion's head and rump, the former a picturesque pinnacle of rock, so perpendicular on its western face that the observer would fain believe its summit had never been desecrated by mountain goat, let alone human foot. To the north of Table Mountain extends a long flat and uninteresting shore, covered with Cape Pine and numerous dwarf shrubs; while across the bay, in long and uninterrupted line, will be found the Blue Berg range, little exceeding in height the Malvern hills; again these are backed up by the Hottentot-Hollands—mountains that rise in many places to an altitude of seven or eight thousand feet, which not unfrequently, in June and July, have one third of their summits covered with a draping of snow.

A little to the northward of seaward is to be observed Robin's Island, a flat and uninteresting piece of land, which seldom can be gazed upon without creating a shudder, for here the maniac and leper are incarcerated. As Dante wrote at Hell's Mouth, so at the landing-place of this island might we write, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here!"

But from the doleful let us jump into pleasanter scenes. You have got your ticket, the polite guard shows you to a carriage, the engine whistles, and the train is off. First, the castle—an attractive yet strongly fortified edifice—is passed. Then green fields surround you on either hand; soon after follow trees and bushes, refreshing alike to eye and landscape from their luxuriant foliage.

Rapidly villa after villa is sighted, each structure having a strong resemblance to another, and characterized with more of the type of Indian bungalow architecture than approximating to the dwellings of man in Europe.

Many were the visits I paid. Some to friends that I had not seen for eighteen years!—and what changes had that lapse of time made! The members of a family in particular, I may mention, when last I enjoyed their hospitality, the head of the house was a hale middle-aged man; now, years had stamped their impress on his brow with no light or gentle hand. The daughters, when formerly I saw them, were handsome, joyous girls, entering into womanhood; now they were all married, with families surrounding them—fit prototypes of their mother when I knew them previously. Sights such as this are not the most pleasant to witness, for an inward monitor whispers—nay, that is not the word—tells you point blank that you have not yourself passed through the period scatheless.

On Mr. Molteno, the late premier of the Cape Parliament, whom I had met in former years, I called. His residence was simply charming; surrounded by a garden and shrubberies so well kept as to tell distinctly that they were under a lady's care. The avenue approaching his house was margined on either side by a line of venerable oaks, that would have done credit to the domain of any English nobleman.

Dreaming over the past, and gazing with fond memory on each succeeding house that I recognized, I slowly pursued my way to the railway station; but my wits were wool-gathering, and thus, forgetting the passage of time, I missed my train. For an hour I paced the platform. At first I censured myself for my dilatoriness in no measured terms, but everything is for the best. Lady Frere had had a garden-party that day, and soon a number of her visitors, on their return to Cape Town, appeared at the station. Among them was one whose beauty I may have seen equalled, but not surpassed. Her face was perfect, and imbued with that expression so attractive to all, denominated by the French "*Sympathique*." Nor was her figure less remarkable for its beauty of outline. The planks which her foot pressed were to be envied for the honour done them. She did not walk, but glided like an ethereal being; in Andalusia I have seen the same graceful mode of progression, but never in any other part of the world. Was she married or single? For truly such a rare gem was worthy of a king's ransom! I am aware that there are many pretty girls to be found in Cape Town, but I did not know that it possessed such a priceless gem.

The next day I called upon the Colonial Secretary, and from him I heard that Commandant Lonsdale was residing at the Civil Service Club, and had lately arrived from the front, for the purpose of raising a fresh corps of irregular cavalry.

To see this gentleman, who had had so narrow an escape at Insanwala, I turned my steps in the direction of that well known and hospitable establishment. The Commandant is about five feet nine in height, strongly built, with a remarkably pleasant and intelligent expression of countenance. He was surrounded with candidates for military honours, many of whom, I should think, would look more appropriately placed behind the counter of Marshall and Snellgrove, measuring ribands by the yard, than decked out in war-paint, and bestriding the prancing steed that scents the battle afar, and impatiently expresses his desire to be mixed in the fray.

Afterwards I visited the camp of these irregulars, to see them at riding drill. A sorrier display of Rosinantes I never beheld. In many particulars they had a strong resemblance to the human visitors at Bethesda's Pool, being halt, maimed, and, so to say, "*Myope!*"

One of the officers requested me to examine a beast which he proposed selecting for a charger.

The first question he asked was, "Do you think he is spavined?" I "*smole,*" as Artemus Ward says, for the brute possessed the most undeniable spavins, the most undoubted splints, with wind-galls and capped hocks you might have hung your hat upon!

"Do you think he is lame in the off fore-foot?" was the next inquiry; "he certainly appears to me to go tender upon it."

"If anything," I responded, "I think *that* particular leg the best of the lot!"

Soon after the above colloquy, drill commenced. The recruits were, without exception, the most strange collection of men I ever saw assembled on a parade-ground. Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, and Germans, with a sprinkling of English, Irish, and Scotch, could be found in the ranks; and a certain air was to be discovered in all, more characteristic of the sailor than of the landsman.

When the order to mount was given, some terrible struggling ensued; horses were seen curvetting, rearing, and jumping, dragging all over the drill-ground their would-be riders, with one foot in the stirrup. At length order was, in some degree, restored; for sailors have a happy knack of accommodating themselves to circumstances. Thus, each man hoisted his neighbour aloft, till only one remained dismounted; and an amiable bystander, taking pity on the forlorn position of this unfortunate individual, gave him an energetic heave, so willingly and muscularly administered, that the horseman, instead of remaining in the saddle, fell over it on the opposite side in an incompetent heap. However, the son of Mars, though slightly disfigured by the catastrophe, was resolved that he would not be vanquished, and his perseverance was rewarded on a second attempt. No way discomfited, and evidently proud of his exploit, he joined the ranks, with the tip of his toe just resting in the stirrup-irons, the leathers

of which were evidently six inches too short for him; this, however, did not prevent him turning out his feet at right angles to the flanks of his gallant charger. But the fun now became fast and furious, as the orders "Walk!" "Trot!" &c., were given; troopers fell off right and left. The on-looker would have imagined that they were in action, under a fearful fire, while those that retained their elevated position could be found anywhere between the horse's tail and its ears.

The following day I embarked on board the S.S. "Dunkeld," for Durban.

One of the old troopships of former years used to be said to roll so fearfully that she went completely round, and came up on the other side. The vessel I was now on board of did not do this, but evinced a strong disposition to make the attempt.

On the third day we reached our destination. The bar was a seething cauldron of snow-white spray; nevertheless, the steam tug-boat pressed through the rollers, and, in an hour and a half afterwards, we were landed at the Point, where confusion, from the amount of military stores collected, and the number of persons employed in their transshipment, reigned paramount.

A drive of a couple of miles brought me to the old club-house, where I was glad to rest after the fatigues I had suffered in the latter part of my journey.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THREE-YEAR SYSTEM.

THE old club at Durban is situated in the principal thoroughfare, and is called "old" in contradistinction from an opposition establishment, which has lately been started, and is designated the "new" club.

A gentleman who came with me from Cape Town in the "Dunkeld" kindly proposed, and had me seconded, as an honorary member of the former, during my residence in the town. This consideration of my friend saved me no end of trouble, and effected a great economy in my expenditure. What I saw of the members I liked much. Their manner was marked by that *bon-homie* which is the characteristic of the travelled gentleman; in which I differ strangely from that veracious historian, Mr. Archibald Forbes, who has described them as very much the reverse. True, no two people see things alike; in fact, I do not doubt that we form our estimate of persons by comparing them to those we have been in the habit of associating with, particularly during the

early days of manhood. The predominant subject of conversation was, of course, the war. All had friends who had seen service in it, many had actually served themselves; and it afforded me great delight to listen to the praises and high encomiums which were lavished upon that kind-hearted nobleman, Lord Chelmsford.

When I left England, more than one of our leading periodicals censured his conduct in no measured terms. These severe comments, I have reason to believe, were written by persons unaware of the difficulties attending upon a campaign in South Africa.

How different is the tone of those who have spent the majority of their lives in the country, and are well acquainted with the obstacles that must ever surround one who handles a large force in this infant colony, or in the territories which surround it.

A political controversy between a well-known newspaper correspondent of Cape Town, and an old resident of Natal, was most amusing, and at the same time instructive. The former gentleman—who was young, clever, and possessed of a good command of language—belonged to what I should denominate the Radical, or rather, Liberal school, the latter being an uncompromising Conservative.

My sympathies, I need not say, were with the last; but, I regret to state that the superior talents of his antagonist worsted him at every

point. Up to the wee small hours the battle raged with increased violence, and but for the interference of friends—but for their assurance that it would be better to renew it upon a future occasion—I doubt not that, if the desire of the combatants had been consulted, the strife would have been continued until the golden rays of light illuminated the eastern horizon and indicated the advent of another day.

Major Butler, the well-known author of that fascinating book "*The Great Lone Land*," being quarter-master general, immediately after breakfast next morning I went to his office to report my arrival. To my surprise he had received no instructions in reference to me. However, he promised to telegraph at once to head-quarters, as it was possible the communication from the War Office that referred to the subject had been forwarded there.

As no answer could be received for many hours, I visited the camp and remount stable—the former being situated upon an uninteresting flat and under the shadow of the Berea, a spot which to my mind appeared to be singularly unhealthy, as it was little elevated above high-water mark, though I never heard that it turned out to be so. During the summer months I fear it would have proved itself untenable. The remount stables were close at hand; and it was not without feelings of grief that I saw many a noble English charger in the buildings devoted to

the use of the sick. Poor animals, they were destined never to see their native land again. The green meadows, hedges, and trees, that their eyes had been accustomed to, would never more greet their sight. But man—proud son of earth, deny it if you will—they, as well as you, have died in doing their duty.

From there I directed my steps to the transport agent, to make arrangements for my baggage to be taken to Pietermaritzburg.

The proprietor I met at his office-door.

He was an old acquaintance, and recognized me at once; however, much as he was disposed to show me favour, he could not hold out the faintest hope of being able to forward my kit for at least seven or eight days. In the course of conversation I questioned him on the cause of the high rate of transport. His response was a painful one for an Englishman to listen to. I will endeavour to give it, as nearly as possible, in his own words.

“You see, sir, the teamsters don’t feel safe; those ‘bits of boys’ you call soldiers won’t ‘stand,’ but skedaddle at the first sight of a Zulu; and when that’s the case, what is to become of a driver? If he follows suit, he loses his waggon and oxen; if he don’t, he gets assegaied! I, nor any of us, hain’t a word to say agin the officers. Poor gentlemen! before they’ll show their heels, the knobkeerie has spoilt their chance of doing so. You must have a pesky lot of fools at home

to think that young 'uns like that can fight Zulus! It takes a man for the work, and a good man too.”

As I wended my way to the club, I felt truly sorrowful at heart at what I had heard. But how can it be otherwise since Cardwell's bill has had effect, and men are selected for privates, regardless of physique, and officers chosen if able to pass an examination which none but an old bookworm or an overstrained brain-power could possibly accomplish. When I look back in the retrospect of my memory, and my mind conjures up before me the soldiers that fought in the Crimea, bronzed, weather-beaten men with bearded faces, I feel assured that they never would have shown their backs to the foes, let their nationality be what you will. Inkermann proved this; for, but for the dogged determination of the rank and file, what has been accredited to us as one of the most glorious victories our arms ever obtained, would in future history have been denominated a defeat.

Later on in the day I called upon a friend at the Royal Hotel. The establishment was so crowded that numbers of the visitors were compelled to sleep upon the floor. This hostelry—the principal one of the kind in Durban—is agreeably situated, with a large tree in front, around and about which are numerous seats and tables, recalling vividly the gardens in some old German country town. Add the coloured lamps amongst the foliage, and the illusion would have been

complete. This was a favourite place of assemblage after dinner, and the corks of soda-water popped frequently in chorus to the strains of some lively air. Here also were told the most marvellous stories of hairbreadth escapes, and were narrated deeds of prowess that really startled and overpowered soldiers of the old school, such as myself; for never yet has it been my luck to kill five—nay sometimes ten—of the enemy in one engagement. Thank God, it has not been so; but the rising generation far surpass their predecessors, in fighting, or in relation of their deeds of valour. Strange as it may appear, volunteers were always the persons who had such sanguinary reminiscences to record.

Another attraction possessed by this establishment was a collection of wild animals, almost amounting to a menagerie. In one cage were a couple of tiger cats, beautiful silky-coated creatures, with brilliant skins, decorated with markings of the jettest black. They appeared to feel their captivity sadly, and, although some time prisoners, had lost none of their original ferocity. Man, who had deprived them of liberty, they could not and would not recognize as a friend, but were prepared to defy his authority at any moment with tooth and claw.

Turning from them, you discover an aviary filled with all the most brilliant birds this part of the world produces—bright orange, green, and scarlet, being the dominant colours.

Out of doors, in a perfect state of freedom, either on the grass in front of the house, or in the vicinity of the stable-yard, will be observed by the visitor Madagascar cats, strange specimens of the quadrumana, with eyes so large and tail so long that one cannot help wondering at nature being so bountiful in this respect to so small an animal.

But while puzzling our brains on this subject, hop, hop, hop! goes something in our rear. Naturally we turn round to look, and discover it to be a kangaroo from Australia, and so domesticated that the timid-eyed creature immediately endeavours to make friends with you. But there is another creature equally desirous of notice. It is a meer-kat—an animal much resembling the mongoose of India. They are easily tamed, and make most charming pets, never being so happy as when they are taken notice of.

In front of the hall-door stands a spring-bok; a yelping little cur employs its utmost exertions to frighten it, but the graceful antelope only lowers its horns to meet the aggressor when he approaches too near.

Possibly the reader may say that I am straying from my subject; if I am, I must ask pardon, and offer in excuse my passionate affection for the animal creation.

That evening a telegram was forwarded to me by Major Butler, in which I was ordered to proceed to Maritzburg, and report myself to Major-General Clifford, Commander of base and lines of

communication, also the head of the Intelligence Department.

At nine o'clock a.m. I entered the train, *en route* to Botha's Hill, where travellers have to change to the post-cart or 'busses, as the railroad is not yet constructed to its termination.

The scenery along this line is remarkably pretty; plenty of timber, often growing on the steepest slopes, while the grass that carpets the soil is as green as green can be. In no portion of the world can be found so many beautiful sites for villas and country residences.

Locomotion upon this line of railroad is not fast. The gradients are too steep for such to be the case, and I fear the outlay for its construction must be so excessive that it never will pay the stock-holders. I am aware that Natalians differ from me upon this subject. The future will prove who is right and who is wrong.

At Botha's Hill I changed to the post-cart: four apparently unbroken horses are attached to it, for a Zulu boy hangs to the head of each.

On the driver learning that all are seated, they receive the order to "Let go," and away we pelt o'er hill and valley, at a pace that cannot fail to strike the new arrival with wonder, possibly with fear. Sunset sees me deposited at the Royal Hotel, its worthy host and his wife subtending me a courteous welcome.

Thus the last of my journey by public conveyance has terminated.

CHAPTER V.

MEMORIES.

MR. DOIG, proprietor of the Royal Hotel, I had known in former years. It may be that this was the reason that induced him to give me one of his best rooms, and that all to myself, although in almost every apartment there were two beds, each of which was occupied. In fact, the establishment was so much crowded, that it was no rare occurrence for several guests to sleep nightly on the drawing-room floor.

It was late that evening before I retired to rest, for many were the old friends I met; so that old battles had to be fought over again, and new projects discussed. I made several attempts to steal away, but in each I was thwarted; in vain I pleaded fatigue, but no excuse would be accepted; thus I was compelled to make a virtue of necessity, and submit. Our host, finally, seeing the plight I was in, came to the rescue, and most successfully put a stop to the conviviality by closing the bar. After six hours sound sleep, I turned out fresh and fit; and as I gazed from out

of my chamber-window while dressing, numerous memories of the past were recalled, for I occupied the same room in which my dear old friend Morris and myself had been domiciled four years back, when we were on our way to the Elephant Country.

Invigorated by a thoroughly good breakfast, I started to report myself to the Honourable Major-General Clifford, V.C., C.B. Early as the hour was, he was in his office and hard at work.

This officer's appearance would be certainly prepossessing, if there were not an occasional harsh satirical expression in his look that much mars the attractiveness of his otherwise handsome features. As I left head-quarters, a person I did not at first recognize saluted me, and held out his hand. The countenance was familiar; still, for the life of me, I could not recollect where we had met; but a momentary explanation sufficed, for he it was that, three years ago, had supplied me with a dinner at Hartebeest Fontein, when on my homeward journey from the interior.

Having the whole day before me, I paid a few visits; afterwards I returned to the hotel, which I reached about half-an-hour prior to the tiffin hour. No portion of the day was more favourable for seeing military celebrities; for parades, drills, and orderly-room duties, were concluded for the forenoon. The porch was crowded with warriors; you elbowed warriors on the left and on the right, and in front of you they blocked the way. I was

proud to be in such company. Might not the passer-by take me for a warrior too, although garbed in the plainest of mufti; for I was big enough, bronzed and bearded enough, to be supposed the hero of innumerable campaigns? Yes, there was some satisfaction in this thought; so I remained among the warriors. There was one characteristic common to all. The hair-cutter had plied his shears most effectually on the heads of every one; so that the stumps, which had once been locks, stuck out in every direction like the quills on the back of an angry porcupine. The costume of each individual was no less remarkable; if any of them—with very few exceptions—had made their appearance on the parade-ground at Aldershot or the Curragh, a few general officers would have immediately afterwards been carried to their quarters in a fit.

The only garbs that reminded me of home were those of a couple of cavalry-men, who had lately arrived from England; but the engineers, gunners, and linesmen were habited in *such* tunics—stained, soiled, and bleached—that it would be difficult to say, in many instances, what were their original colours. Moreover, breeches had taken the place of trousers—breeches of every colour that these useful garments are ever endowed with; while boots, that either buckled, laced, or did not require any superfluous additions, covered their lower extremities to the knee.

But leaving the regulars, we come to the auxiliary forces. I have seen pictures of buccaneers, banditti, and burglars. Take a third of each of the above-mentioned, simmer them over a slow fire, and add plenty of cayenne-pepper to give them complexion, and you will have a full fledged volunteer "all of the modern time." Each wore a slouch hat with a puggery of blue, red, or some other colour around it, according to the corps he belonged to; then came a short frogged jacket, buttoning from the throat to the waist. This garment, to say the least, was convenient, for neither friend nor foe could tell with certainty whether you had a shirt on or not; and this article of clothing was reported to be remarkably scarce in the front. Next come the breeks—yellow cords, with one or two stripes of black braid along their outer side. Boots among them were various in their construction; but in this point they did not differ—that each was ornamented with a spur, which, for length of neck and size of roller, would have beaten all creation.

There is no denying the fact that they were an extremely fine-looking lot of young men, and that they did good service; but for frightening timid ladies and nervous old men, their equal could not have been found. Conscientiously, I do not think that I would have any hankering myself to meet any of them on a dark night, particularly if it was in the vicinity of Hounslow Heath, for I am certain

that, without hesitation, I should take to my heels, and never halt till I got shelter under the roof-tree of some respectable family, and decline to go forth again any more that night; no, not if I knew it!

I was told upon my return from the interior that I looked the greatest villain of the lot—looking-glasses were not abundant, nor did I go in search of one—still I should be unwilling to deny that such was a fact; but if this assertion was true, then I can only say that I am sorry for myself.

As far as physique and fitness to endure fatigue went, the officers of the volunteer corps far outstripped those of the regulars; and I am of opinion that they could have withstood much more exposure.

Pietermaritzburg at this period reminded me much of Washington during the late civil war in North America. A story was current there at that time, that a horse, attached to a buggy hitched in front of Willard's hotel, broke loose, and ran madly down the avenue. The frightened animal, in its flight, knocked down thirteen generals and twenty-one brigadiers; and yet it was not much of a day for generals or brigadiers either! I feel certain that if a restive steed had played the same pranks in the capital of Natal, that the number of heads of departments and other distinguished officers that would have been injured would have been fearful, for warriors

here—at the time I write of—were more than abundant.

To stand on the porch of the hotel and watch the trains of waggons passing was ever a source of amusement. The coloured drivers of oxen are a race nowhere to be seen out of South Africa. For conceit and self-estimation I will back them against any people in the world. Note this fellow coming along; he walks as if he were the pink of fashion, and every eye were centred upon him; a self-complacent, self-satisfied smirk is conspicuous in his countenance; while he drags his feet after him, as if walking were an exertion to which he was unaccustomed. Over his shoulder he carries a whip, the handle of which is probably eighteen feet long; to the tip of it is attached a lash nearly double the above dimensions, made out of the hide of the giraffe. The waggon has just crossed the gutter in front of the house; for a moment all the cattle are not pulling together, and one in the centre of the span hangs back from the yoke; in a moment the driver has perceived the delinquent's conduct, and an instant after he is within reach of the culprit. Prefacing his language with an extraordinary yell—half-scream, half-Indian war-whoop—and terminating with "Englānd, Akermān," as the case may be, finally concluding with "*amāgū treck*"—the lash of the instrument of torture all the time describing rapid revolutions in the air—down comes the thong with the report of a pistol-shot, and the

skulker has received a cut that he will remember till—well, the next time.

Pietermaritzburg is a very pretty town; in it are many handsome shops and private residences, while through nearly every street flow streams of water. Luxuriant trees and handsome shrubs grow along the coping of the side-walks, or in the numerous gardens. The walls of the dwellings are generally white, and the roofs red tile; this contrast, when seen from a short distance, has a most harmonious effect. As viewed from the Town Hill, few prettier domestic scenes can be gazed on. It is situated in and on the edge of a valley, and is surrounded by a perfect amphitheatre of grass-clad hills, gradually increasing in elevation as you get further from the town. Again these are backed, in many directions, by mountains of no inconsiderable elevation.

When the country surrounding Natal's capital—for here is the seat of government—was first settled, I doubt very much if trees were to be found numerous in the vicinity; but now they are to be seen in every direction—evidence of the excellence of the soil, and of the thrift, patience, and taste of the agriculturalist.

One thing I must not forget to mention, for never in any part of the world have I seen their like, viz. the sunsets. They are simply gorgeous—surpassing imagination, surpassing description. At evening the rays of the departing luminary are reflected from peak and crag, throwing golden

rays over the landscape, and lighting up the cold inanimate crags as if they were composed of burnished copper. When clouds float over the sky and their shadows fall upon those verdant hill sides, another charming effect is given to the scene. In the Lake District, Scotland, in the states of Maine and Virginia, I have indented into my memory the delight I have felt when viewing this effect. There, they are but as the positive degree in comparison to the superlative, which is witnessed here.

Can it, then, be wondered at that the early settlers selected this lovely locality for one of their first resting-places? Most assuredly, if I had been among them, I should have counselled them, with all the eloquence my tongue could command, and with all the enthusiasm my nature could exert, to do what they have done.

CHAPTER VI.

ON DUTY.

THE following morning I again reported myself, when I received orders to return in an hour and a half for instructions.

Having this time to spare, I directed my steps towards the fort, and paid a visit to Commandant Marshall, commanding the troop of irregular horse which bore his name. The men were of a superior stamp to any of the irregular corps I had previously inspected, many being Boers and consequently passable equestrians, with a tolerable knowledge of the management of horses. My reception was most hospitable. The chief introduced me to his adjutant; and if I mistake not, when the history of this war is written, it will be found that Marshall's Volunteers did good service.

When returning towards head-quarters, on the side of the slope of the hill, which severs the fort from the town, I observed a particularly neat encampment composed of several tents. Upon inquiry I learned that General Sir John Bissett, long a resident in the colony, and whose name is

associated with many of the early Kaffir wars, resided here; so I jumped my horse across the ditch and called upon the veteran soldier. At a glance one could see that the occupant was an old campaigner, for everything was arranged with that view to comfort only to be obtained by a very lengthened experience. Having "chin-chinned" one another over a glass of "square-face," I bid my host *au revoir*, and returned to headquarters, where I found my instructions completed, and only awaiting the signature of Sir E. Strickland, the General, and myself.

The principal commissariat officer being at hand, we proceeded to him to obtain his autograph. After this was affixed, I was detained some minutes, and in that time learnt the herculean task, and the unheard of difficulties, that that department had to contend against in their efforts to obtain sufficient transport for the army. The Commissary-General had been informed that a *ring* existed among the owners of waggons, to force the Government to pay them higher prices than the exorbitant ones they were then receiving.

Naturally, he was very irate upon the subject, and in the plainest terms, told one of the confederacy, that if such swindling attempts were continued, he would advise, or rather request, the Commander-in-Chief to place Natal under martial law.

My own idea is that this should have been

done at the commencement of the war; and, if such a step had been taken, I have little doubt that much trouble and expense would have been avoided.

On returning to head-quarters, I was handed my instructions, and verbally ordered to be prepared to start upon my expedition to the interior on the morrow. An impress for a considerable sum of money was provided me, also 160*l.* to purchase four horses; an after-rider also had to be procured—no easy matter, as every white and coloured man that I informed of my destination prophesied that I would never return.

It may not be out of place to mention here, that, in visiting distant Kaffir-land, to obtain labourers to assist in the transport of the service, another object, doubtless, was in view, viz., to learn the animus of the chiefs towards our Government. Thus, those who were willing to give help might safely be deemed friends; those who refused, the reverse.

As may be imagined, I had now no idle moments on hand. From a publican I bought a dark-bay horse, with brown muzzle and black points. In the receipt for the money paid, I found him designated "Tommy," so I retained the name. From Captain Farrar, of the Guards, I purchased a powerful dappled cream-colour, with black points. His eyes denoted vice; but the only approach to it that I ever became cognizant of was a tendency to lay down in the stall

when girthed, or in the street when mounted; also a predisposition to buck-jump. Him I christened "Bobby." From Mr. Doig I obtained two animals, both bays—the one sixteen hands and a half high, the other fifteen-two.

Quite a little episode took place when trying the paces of the larger animal.

A lad had been put upon his back to trot him out. At first the brute was sulky, and would not go, so I provided the boy with a cutting whip. The rider did not spare it, and the result was that the horse bolted, with all the police in the neighbourhood in pursuit. At length the runaway was captured, and taken to the station-house, the unfortunate rough-rider being incarcerated for endangering the safety of the community by violent riding.

I at once paid the fine, and engaged the delinquent as my attendant in my approaching expedition.

Being now provided with horses, the afternoon was spent in obtaining saddlery, arms, and ammunition, not forgetting two blankets for myself and two for my after-rider. This was my entire kit. I had not even a change of clothes, for such superfluous additions to one's baggage it is impossible to carry on horseback during so lengthened a journey as I was about to undertake, and which would probably exceed eight or nine weeks, over three thousand miles having to be traversed. Thus, having settled my business

arrangements, I would leave serious matters alone for the present.

“ Commandant Gillmore ! ” I hear a voice exclaim behind me. I turn round to know who addresses me, when I discover it to be Mr. Doig, who tells me that an old friend is in the sitting-room waiting to see me.

At once I proceeded there, and, with pleasure, recognized my former acquaintance, Mr. Alexander Prefer, late proprietor of the Royal Hotel, and my host on the occasion of my former visit to it.

“ Ah ! my friend, ” said he, subtending his hand, “ I am very glad to see you. I did not expect to meet you once more in this life ; we must drink—champagne ! what you like, de very best ; for you know money is no object. ” So we had a pint of champagne.

The wine loosened his tongue, and so pleasantly and rapidly did time fly in the society of this worthy, although eccentric man, that I almost regretted the velocity with which it passed.

At length he exclaimed, “ I loave you ver mooch indeed, for you haf made me a celebrity ! When Sir Bartle Frere and de General com to my house—I keep de Castle Hotel, at Howick, now, you must understand—they say, ‘ Where is Mr. Prefer ? ’ I answer, ‘ I am dat man. ’ ‘ *The Mr. Prefer mentioned in the Great Thirsty Land ?* ’ ‘ De same, gentlemen ; at your service. ’ Then dey say, ‘ It am unnecessary to ask de question, for dere cannot be two Mr. Prefers ! ’ Den dey

treat me as friend and gentleman. Ah, Colonel, you have made me one celebrity !”

If I had drunk all the champagne this kind-hearted acquaintance wished me to, I fear I should have been incapable long before the dinner-hour.

To see the wealth, beauty, and fashion of Pietermaritzburg, I borrowed from the landlord a charming thoroughbred mare, and directed my course towards the Park—for know, gentle reader, that this town has not only a Park, but, I may add, a very charming one—where the military band of the garrison regiment plays every Saturday afternoon.

The evening was balmy and refreshing. At each turn in the road, and along the highway, numbers of equestrians, and conveyances of various descriptions, many of them filled with fair occupants, were to be met.

Natalians are decidedly “horsey” in their tastes, and there are few ladies who do not possess their own hacks. To an eye accustomed to Rotten Row, and the perfection of every equipage in the Hyde Park mile, exception might be taken to the *tout ensemble* of the turns-out here ; but the genial cordiality and goodnature of their owners very soon puts a stop to an idea of invidious comparison.

If the equipments and housings of many of the fair equestriennes do not, in the majority of instances, entirely please the eye of a fastidious

observer, there is one among the crowd whom it would be difficult to match in perfection, even among the fashionable frequenters of Melton Mowbray.

Her mount—a thoroughbred mare, imported from England, and rejoicing in the name of “Spangles”—would unquestionably be able to hold her own in the first flight with the Quorn. The fashionable dinner-hour has arrived, however; and with much bustle, and not a little confusion, every one is making the best of his way to his respective home.

People here are not satisfied to go at a pace such as the staid and stay-at-home Englishman affects upon a London thoroughfare, but rather indulge in the furious *sauve qui peut* and devil-take-the-hindmost mode of procedure.

At ten next morning I was ready for my start, and habited in the costume of a buccaneer. In favour of its becomingness I can say little; of its extreme comfort and suitability to the work, much.

Numerous shakes of the hand, and as many voices to say “God speed you,” plainly indicate that I leave a host of kind friends behind, who wish me success on my perilous journey—from which I may never return. One vaults into the saddle, and a glance to the rear, to wave a parting adieu, and I am once more “on duty.”

CHAPTER VII.

EN ROUTE.

My *cortège* attracted considerable attention, and many were the persons who stopped and gazed upon it as I passed on towards the Town Hill.

In front of the post-office were assembled half-a-dozen military men of my acquaintance: to have passed them without a shake of the hand and a "good bye" would have been a lack of courtesy I did not wish to be guilty of. Thus I halted for a minute.

When about to resume my progress, Mr. Pre-fer, panting and blowing from unusual exertion, rushed up to me, and gave me the information that he was unable to obtain a conveyance to take him to Howick, although he had offered an unprecedented price for the desired accommodation. Would I, therefore, if he borrowed a saddle and bridle, give him a mount, so far, on one of my horses. The distance to his residence, the Castle Hotel, being only fourteen miles, and my acquaintance being very light, I unhesitatingly acceded to his request.

We therefore returned to the yard of the Crown hotel, where Bobby was saddled and bridled.

My worthy friend complained that he felt very unwell. I would not for a moment have the reader to imagine that he was suffering from the potations of the previous night; however, that he was not himself was apparent, for his language was hurried and his intonation guttural. With some difficulty, and the assistance of two grooms, he was ultimately seated in the pigskin, and my journey was resumed.

All went well until the flat was reached which extends between the suburbs of Maritzburg and the commencement of the Town Hill. Conversation had not flagged. Reminiscences of former days were recalled, and many a laugh had been enjoyed over the eccentricities of mutual friends.

At length my comrade commenced to tell me a lengthened story, about a person of the name of Gregory, who professed to have been in the army for many years, and who unquestionably was a Bohemian of the first water. The object of his visit to Natal no one was aware of, although it was frequently whispered, *sotto voce*, that he was a detective from Scotland-yard sent in pursuit of one of the Corries. Whether this was true or not, one thing I can safely assert, that I never met a person in my life who could dispose of more brandies and sodas in the course of the day than this same Captain Gregory. My com-

rade had suffered at his hands, and got excited over his wrongs, as he narrated them.

“One hundred and twenty pounds he owed me, mein Gott, and I never see one thaler of his money. He drink two bottles of brandy every day; and as to soda vater, it take one machine, all de time, to make enough for him. He always thirsty—never sober; mein Gott, what for a thirst that man have!” and here Mr. Prefer became excited, gesticulating violently with his hands. It would be impossible for me to say whether the horse became imbued with the feelings of the rider, or that it supposed he was about to administer to its flanks a severe castigation with his stick, but the animal did something—what, I cannot say—and my poor companion immediately afterwards lay upon the sword on the broad of his back.

I dismounted, and endeavoured to raise him, but he was limp as an unstarched piece of linen.

I addressed him, and he answered me as if he were solving a conundrum. My strongest sympathies were roused in his behalf; therefore I wished to replace him upon my horse, but neither the exertions of self and servant could accomplish the task.

It was painful to leave a friend under such circumstances; but what other alternative was there? The General already supposed me to be some miles upon my road; and as staff officers have a happy facility for turning up when least

expected, I felt it to be compulsory upon me to resume my journey.

Clóse by was outspanned a Boer waggon ; to it, I carefully bore the unfortunate, and placing him in charge of its owner, then left him comfortably reclining on the grass between its wheels.

That he was not hurt I am convinced ; for in occasional snatches, sung in the most modulated and quavering of tones, he indulged in odd lines of his favourite national hymn, the "Wacht am Rhein."

Once more I threw myself into the saddle. Town Hill was soon reached. An hour more took me to its summit, and by three o'clock I halted in front of the stables of Ford's Hotel, Howick.

Another stage might easily have been made that night, but that I discovered my horses' shoes to be in a most unsatisfactory state, and therefore determined to remain here till all had been supplied with a fresh set.

The Castle Hotel, now the property of Mr. Prefer, I found both clean and comfortable, and the repose which surrounded it was truly grateful after all the bustle and excitement of life in Maritzburg.

At break of day next morning, after paying for the keep of my nags for the night, the charge for which was enough to frighten an English traveller, I pursued my course to Currie's post, a distance of about fourteen miles, where I breakfasted ;

that is to say, if cold coffee and old salted treck-bullock can be called by such a name.

About mid-day I resumed my journey, and soon after came up to Marshall's Volunteers, encamped by the roadside, on their way to join Lord Chelmsford at Dundee. Here I tiffined, and my horses were fed and well looked after. Soon after two p.m. I remounted.

The next object of interest that occurs is the truly magnificent valley of Kars Kloof. It differs so much from the general appearance of the rest of the neighbouring country, that it may be said to have an individuality of its own.

Between grassy slopes, in portions well wooded, and rendered more picturesque by jutting rocks and crags, flows a rapid stream, not exceeding in magnitude what would be designated a 'burn' in Scotland, and just such a one as the truant school-boy or juvenile sportsman would frequently succeed in obtaining a good basket of trout from.

I am not singular in my admiration of this spot, many of the Natal merchants are evidently of my way of thinking, for they have selected this site to build cottages and bungalows, to which they retire during the heat of summer, or to recover from the fatigues resulting from an excess of business.

The road that descends and ascends from the apex of the valley is wondrous steep, and it is rarely that the traveller passes this locality without seeing numerous bullock-waggon stuck fast,

from want of power in the oxen to drag them up the incline.

A mile from here is a most picturesque waterfall, said to be three hundred feet high. Time did not permit me to visit it. Thus its altitude I am not able to vouch for. At the top of the valley, on the north side, is a house built out of corrugated iron; it once was a canteen, but now is deserted by its owner for fear of the Zulu. My friend Morris and myself, on my former journey, christened it "Rest and be thankful."

The remainder of my journey to Mooi River was much interrupted by the long trains of transport-waggons toiling along towards the front. My knowledge of African travelling informed me, at a glance, that all of these were overloaded—a most injudicious course to pursue, as it is certain to result in the oxen getting worn out before they have accomplished half the work that otherwise might be expected from them. In this part of the road there are several exceedingly bad ruts, consequent upon the washing away of the soil by the heavy rains at the end of spring; and when any of these were reached, the wheels of the cumbrous vehicles were certain to get embedded in the soft ground up to the hub, when the most fearful whipping matches would ensue.

If one driver did not succeed in getting his span of cattle to extricate its load, he would call several of his companions to his assistance, when each would double thong their whips, and flog

the poor brutes in the most inhuman and barbarous manner.

After a quarter of an hour of such work, if success had not been awarded to their exertions, a span from another waggon would be hitched alongside, when the flogging process would recommence, and if the treck-tow did not smash, the probability was that they would overcome the difficulty they had to contend with.

There is not an animal in the world, that I know of, which has to endure such frightful cruelty as a Natal ox. Their coloured drivers seem to delight in punishing them; and the severity with which it is done may be well imagined when I inform the reader that an expert, with one of these formidable whips, can bring blood at every cut he delivers. If some of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals could only visit this distant part of the earth, they would find plenty of subjects on which to exercise their philanthropy. Oxen, as a rule, are stupid, perverse, and obstinate; but I believe that much of this is produced by the inhuman manner in which they are used, as well as by the fact that their strength is usually overtaxed.

At sundown I dismounted in front of the hotel, and after seeing my horses fed and well bedded down, I wandered forth to visit the lions of the place.

There is a pretty little episcopal church here, several attractive farmhouses, and a large store.

Close by flows the Mooi River, a branch of the Tugela, over which is thrown a handsome and serviceable bridge. The neighbourhood is celebrated for its pasture, consequently it has become a favourite stock and horse raising locality. The stream is about the size of the Severn at Shrewsbury, and is a succession of pools and rapids, guarded on either side by a wide extent of meadow land. Strange as it may appear, I have been informed that no fish are to be found in its waters.

That night the racket at the hotel was almost unendurable, from the number of transport riders who patronized the bar.

At all hours they appeared to arrive, yet none seemed to go away. Their thirst might have been excused if a drink would have satisfied it; but I believe, with this class of people, a verification of the French adage takes place—" *L'appétit vient en mangeant.*"

Flesh and blood could stand this treatment no longer, so I dressed and turned out. To my satisfaction I found that the day was breaking.

Numerous brilliant clouds in the east proclaimed a magnificent sunrise. The whole of the distant peaks were illuminated with a golden flood of light, but the valley beneath still remained in comparative darkness, and heavy mists rolled up from the river bed, telling of fever and other miasmatic diseases.

After some trouble and a considerable trial of

temper, I found my boy. From his appearance and manner, he, too, had been keeping it up all night; in fact, when roused and called forth into the light of day, he was still far from sober. Believing that there is nothing like action to work off dissipation, I ordered him forthwith to feed and clean the horses, and remained to see that his work was properly performed.

In a maudlin way he went about his labour; and one of the horses, taking advantage of his inactivity, skilfully planted its two heels under his ribs, sending him to mother earth as thoroughly as would have done the blow of a prize-fighter.

Hurriedly picking himself up, he seized a pitchfork, and brimming over with passion, was about to resent the indignity he had suffered, when I interfered and abruptly put an end to his intention, pointing out to him at the same time that he alone was to blame, and that the horse would not have kicked him had he been sober and performed his duties in a rational way. My admonition he apparently did not like, and his expression denoted that he would prefer to dispute my authority; in fact, he went so far as to commence an angry tirade; but believing that he detected a look in my eye expressing that I was not a person to be trifled with, he grumblingly renewed his labours. For several days that boy was better behaved than he had been heretofore.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ROAD.

Soon after my boy had finished his labours, I mounted, passed over the bridge, and pursued my route up the adjoining hills. The road here is, in parts, very steep and tortuous, immense boulders, in many places, projecting and threatening that when the first rains fall they will precipitate themselves into the road and bar further progression. Away to the westward stretch a magnificent range of mountains, towering to an altitude of seven or eight thousand feet; they appear near at hand, yet they are not less than sixty miles off. They compose the eastern boundary of Bassutoland, and are near the scene of the engagement with Langabalele, where several of the Natal Carbineers were killed, and the late Colonel Durnford (who fell at Insanwala) was wounded. Peace to his ashes, for a braver soldier never drew sabre or bestrode charger, and I have a right to know, for I was acquainted with him from childhood. The surrounding country, although well covered with grass, is monotonous in the extreme; for each hill seemed to resemble the other, the only perceptible

difference being that as you progressed northward they appeared to increase in elevation. That this country will, at some future day, be covered with farm-houses, I doubt much ; for pastoral, and not agricultural pursuits, it is alone suited.

My horses I am well pleased with. Tommy, the favourite, is a splendid little animal, possessed of great endurance and pluck combined with the most amiable temper. All his paces are excellent, and so willing is he that spur has not yet made acquaintance with his flanks. Moreover he is a beauty, pleasing the observer so much that you cannot help looking at him again and again. I scarcely ever saw a horse with such an expressive countenance ; this, I imagine, arises from the size and intelligent look of his eye ; nor does Bobby, indeed, really deserve second place, for he has given up all his tricks, and is therefore everything that can be desired. My after-rider's animals are also serviceable brutes, but I cannot help thinking that too much daylight is to be seen underneath the big one, or, in other words, that he is rather long on his legs. For a colonial horse he is certainly too big ; the novice, or intending visitor, will do well to remember this, and if he has occasion to mount himself, he will get more work out of a fifteen-hand animal, or even one an inch less, than out of those that exceed this height. Moreover, here you do not want a daisy clipper, much less a horse with a long stride, but a clever quick mover that keeps its legs well under it.

It is extraordinary the difference there is in the methods adopted by persons in handling horses. My servant is constantly getting kicked; yet when my beasts are picqueted or in the stable, I can handle them as I choose with the most perfect immunity.

I had commenced to feel in rather low spirits from the utter silence that surrounded me, for not a vestige of man's presence or animal life was in sight—if I except an obtrusive but very sober plumaged small bird of the lark species, which never appeared so happy as when rolling in the dust—when suddenly, at a turn of the road, I came upon a detachment of the Royal Artillery, just going to have breakfast. There was such a fascination in the scene, that I drew rein and halted, the better to admire it. The cooking-fires were arranged in regular order, while the men, in every garb of undress, hurried to and fro in pursuit of their different duties. Close by were picqueted their horses, the foreground being filled up with waggons drawn up *en échelon*, while in the distance beyond grazed upwards of a hundred bullocks.

On advancing I was met by the officer in command, who at once invited me to join them in their morning meal. Without much pressing I did so, and enjoyed it excessively. The principal dish was wild duck, shot the previous evening on the Mooi River; and they were cooked so admirably, and put on the board so hot, that it was apparent my friends had a capital chef. There are worse

cooks to be found in the world than are frequently discovered among the ranks and files of a British army. But then what shall we say for the sauce? No better in the world can be found; its name is appetite!

This detachment of reinforcements are also *en route* for Dundee. Lord Chelmsford is evidently determined to make it hot for Ketchewayo before long!

Having knee-haltered my horses, they had over an hour to graze; this they appeared to enjoy amazingly, for probably it was a luxury that had been denied them for many a day. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we remember that until they are three or four years old they wander about the country in a state of freedom; after which they pass into the breaker's hands, and are not unfrequently held in a state of bondage ever after.

Let me explain what knee-haltering means. It is a method of securing a horse peculiar to Australia and South Africa; its purpose is to prevent the animals straying, and is performed in the following manner. Raise one of the fore-legs of your nag, then draw his head with the halter-rope towards it, which having accomplished, you make two inverted half-hitches with it around the limb immediately beneath the knee. Thus the animal can feed and walk slowly about. Nevertheless I have seen old stagers—beasts accustomed to veldt life—trot along at such a pace when thus secured, that it was no easy matter to overtake them.

However agreeable the society of my new friends was, many miles lay between me and Escourt, where I hope to rest an hour or two; so when a certain old gentleman, who shall be nameless, drives, needs must.

Up and down, up and down, the same interminable grass hills succeed one another at regular intervals. Mile after mile is traversed without a prospect of change. At length Bushman's River comes in sight, here, a noisy babbling brook; and when it is reached—after making the descent of a precipitous and very stony hill—the road turns off sharp to the right through a kloof, the sides of which are clothed with a dense mass of sub-tropical vegetation. This must be a very trying place for oxen, as numerous skeletons and half-decayed carcases of these unfortunate beasts lay strewn around in every direction.

Soon the road begins to ascend, and for at least a couple of miles this continues; the rocks frowning over you on one side, and a precipice, several hundred feet deep, yawning open at your feet on the other. The road is a masterpiece of human skill and labour, but much requires yet to be done to make it safe. Even in imagination to see a team of runaway horses risking these angles and curves makes me shudder—one false step, one foot too near the margin, and horses and conveyance would afterwards be unrecognizable.

Having attained the summit of the gradient, a

few yards again bring you to the brink, which overlooks the valley beneath; and what a charming panorama lays stretched at your feet! To the left, a scattered village of snow-white cottages embedded in trees, a rapid, clear river skirting its confines, a noble green valley margined by hills, and these again enclosed by lofty mountains. Such is Escourt, such is one of the most picturesque villages in the world.

However, several miles have to be travelled along the face of hills, down steep descents, round abrupt corners, before the flat beneath is reached; after passing over which you traverse a handsome bridge, and you are within the precincts of the village.

Riding up to the hotel, which is close at hand, I order dinner. The establishment looks clean and comfortable, the landlord is civil and obliging, and there are few or no idlers hanging about. As the proprietor cannot promise me my meal for forty minutes, I stroll to the stable; and if there is fair accommodation for the master, there is equally good for his beasts, so I leave them to enjoy their rest, and proceed on my explorations.

After the Insanwala disaster, so convinced were the inhabitants that they would be attacked by the Zulus that they built a most formidable kraal around the police barrack. It may only be intended as a temporary erection; but it is strong and durable, and, in my belief, if defended by a hundred or more determined men, would have

speed was so great that I wonder the driver did not come to grief, for it was now as dark as pitch. In a moment after a gentleman descended from the box-seat. It was Major Ferrers, of the Commissariat Department, in charge of the transport on this part of the road. His energy was wonderful; and without fear of turning out a false prophet, the grass will never grow under his horses' feet when employed upon the service of her Majesty.

CHAPTER IX.

WARRIORS.

UP at daybreak ; however, Major Ferrers had the start of me. Before he bid me good-bye he called me on one side, and warned me that he believed my servant unreliable and a drunkard. Truly a nice character to give a man that is to be your companion for possibly months, and in a ride extending over thousands of miles. But what can be done ? Return to Maritzburg to obtain another, I cannot ; and as to picking up one on the road, his faults might be quite as numerous. Better the devil I know, than the devil I don't know ! To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

However, it is not always possible to protect yourself. My after-rider carries my rifle and bandolier, and if he were wicked or cowardly enough to avail himself of the opportunities offered, he could have any number of chances of putting a bullet through my head or carcase. If he attempts this and misses his aim, God spare him, for I wont.

Leaving the Blue Krantz, a small extent of

woodland is traversed, then a brook is crossed, when the road leads up an ascent to a more elevated plateau than any we have hitherto met with.

Far in the distance frown the towering Drachenberg, the loftiest and grandest range of mountains in Southern Africa. Whenever I look at them Byron's sublime description of the thunderstorm in the Alps is recalled to my memory. It may be the result of my having witnessed many a storm among them; and what thunderstorms they were, far exceeding in severity and intensity any I have experienced in other parts of the earth! Here on such occasions the thunder rolls with scarcely a break in his deep-toned voice, and lightning flashes are almost as frequent as the heavy drops of rain that fall to the earth in a tropical shower.

About half-past nine o'clock a change comes o'er the scene, for the fatigue which the eye has suffered from the previous surroundings is dispelled as your sight rests upon another grand valley, through the middle of which sparkles the bright, clear waters of the Tugela; a stream so lately dyed, lower down upon its course, with the blood of hundreds of our countrymen. But why tax Africa with being the scene of such a disaster? for, gentle reader, if you cast your eye over the map of the world, there are few places you can select which have not witnessed the death throes of our soldiers, who have "been

wiped out" in defence, or to avenge the wrongs which their native land has suffered.

The road here turns off more to the eastward, and when it has descended to the level of the plain that margins the river, the town of Colenso lies in front of you. Since I was here before it has much increased in size, but in no way diminished in its attractive appearance. A broad street, numerous fruit and shade trees, and square white houses with wide verandahs, are its characteristic features. At an hotel on the right hand side of the road, distinguishable by its neatness and well-regulated surroundings, I dismount, and order breakfast. The host, lately an officer in the Bengal army, is civil and obliging, and not only promises to do the best he can for me, but accompanies me to the stables to see that my quadrupeds have every attention paid to their wants. While lounging on the verandah, waiting for the meal to be announced, the too-too-ing of a horn awakes the silent echoes, and soon after a post-cart dashes up, the horses reeking with foam, fairly telling that the pace they have travelled and the distance come has been fast and long. On it there are no less than four warriors, returning home, their corps, Colonial ones, having completed their term of service. The breakfast was in consequence delayed, and I had opportunities of entering into conversation with these knights of the spur and sabre.

Talk of the deeds of prowess that were done

in the days of the Crusaders, of the terrific slaughters inflicted by Saladin and Richard Cœur de Lion, they were nothing to be compared with the deeds of each of these heroes! The havoc that they had committed among the foe was not to be counted by twos or threes, but enumerated at least by two figures. One tall, awkward, and ungainly youth, deeply marked with small-pox, and possessed of an undeniable squint, asserted without a smile upon his countenance—in fact I am inclined to think that he believed he was speaking the truth—that he went into action with fifty cartridges in his bandolier, every one of which he fired away, and it was not his habit to miss more than one buck out of ten that he shot at. The narration of this incident was followed by the explanation, "By God, sir! it was the prettiest day's shooting I ever had in my life! and I would travel a hundred miles to repeat it."

When engaged in hostilities against an enemy, doubtless it is your duty to do as much injury to the foe as possible; and I may be a mawkish sentimentalist, but I should be sorry to think that I had been instrumental in taking forty human lives; nor can I admire the taste of a man who would go a hundred miles to repeat the carnage.

The performance of one of his companions, however, was more attractive. He was surrounded by a number of Zulus immediately after the action at Isanwala; no chance of escape re-

mained open to him but to charge through the enemy. Whilst performing this feat he emptied amongst them each chamber of his revolver, felled a brawny savage with the empty weapon, then drawing his sabre cut down three or four more of his antagonists, and got clear.

These narratives I relate as I heard them, perhaps my informants were drawing on their imagination for the delectation of a greenhorn; in fact I rather think that was the case. One of the number, nevertheless, showed me an assegai wound through the shoulder, which must have been both deep and painful, and I surmise would have killed anything but a volunteer; and as these weapons do not do much execution at a distance exceeding twenty yards, he, at least, must have been within sight of the enemy.

One thing is, however, evident, that brave and bloodthirsty as these warriors were, each was exceedingly delighted that his term of service had expired, and that he had a near prospect of exhibiting his uniform, spurs, and other accoutrements, to the belles and eligible young ladies of the respective villages and towns from which they had come in the old colony.

Fighting evidently makes men thirsty; talking of it has a similar effect, for in the short space of ten minutes there was not one of these worthies that had not destroyed the existence of three well-deserving sodas and brandies. This was "rough" on the liquor, for I doubt much if it

likes to be jumbled up in such a promiscuous manner.

After our breakfast, which really was a very fair one, and tolerably served, *un petit verre de cognac* was required by each of them as a settler for the stomach, after which I assisted them to their several perches on the post-cart, and bid them good-bye, with a parting injunction not to forget to hold on by their eyelids—a piece of advice which, under the circumstances, I considered to be extremely necessary.

Having mounted, I directed my course towards the ford across the Tugela. The river was so low that the water scarcely reached to my horse's knees. Above the ford numerous artisans were at work completing the buttresses of what is destined to be a handsome bridge—a structure which is much required here, as for a great portion of the year the river is quite unfordable, and the traveller, whether by cart, horse, or waggon, has to be transported across in a punt—a slow, dangerous, and most inconvenient method.

As I ascended the hill on the other side, again I passed a large number of transport waggons, loaded with munitions of war and food for man and horse. Slowly they toiled along the heavy sandy road; and as I viewed them I could not help thinking that of all lives I wot of, none can be more monotonous than that of a transport rider.

At the crest of the first hill that I reached, I

came upon the camp of a large number of invalids and wounded returning from the front. I accosted a good-looking young private, who was attended by a handsome pointer, and asked him where the officer in command of the party was. From him I learned that he had remained behind to bring up stragglers. Bidding adieu to these victims of warfare, I sharpened my pace, and in a few miles met the gentleman in command. His clothes were sorely travel-stained, but a merry eye and laughing face told that he had not suffered much bodily.

After a few minutes' chat he handed me his flask, and each drank to a future happy meeting.

About noon I reached the "Rising Sun." The landlord was out, but his wife attended to business during his absence. From the volubility of this woman's tongue, I should imagine that the husband must be a meek man, and that in her case the mare was the better horse. Of one thing she gave me an indisputable proof—viz., that she knew how to charge. After I satisfied my hunger, she narrated to me a perfect volume of her early trials, not the least among which was a misfortune that had befallen her that morning—no less a disaster than that they had lost a pointer, and that her good man had gone to Ladysmith in search of it. Her description of the animal completely tallied with that of the one I had seen with the troops. This I informed her; upon which she called a stalwart Zulu, and ordered him

forthwith to proceed in pursuit of the dog. The native evidently did not like his task, and hesitated to obey; but the virago attacked him with tooth and nail, which had no other effect than to make the burly savage bellow. In spite of this punishment he still stood undecided, when the mistress rushed into the house, immediately returning with a jambok. Poor fellow! he was doubtless well aware of the pain this instrument of torture could produce; for no sooner did he see it than he shot off in the desired direction at a pace that defied pursuit. For ten minutes I stood watching him, and in less than that space he had covered more than a mile, and still he was going at the long springy trot peculiar to his race.

After the excitement, and, I hope, unusual exertion of the hostess, she thought proper to get into a state of hysterics, and bemoaned the hardness of a fate which had thrown her amongst such savages, terminating her lamentations with a long and severe tirade against husbands in general and her own in particular, who left her, a poor lone woman, to fight her way and keep in subjection a host of barbarians, little better, as she confidently assured me, than cannibals.

However, the lady in question was evidently possessed of strong recuperative powers; her natural physique, assisted by a good half-tumbler of brandy, soon brought her round, and she became as loquacious as ever. Would I like, she inquired, to see a couple of Zulu beauties?

“Certainly,” I replied. “Well, come along with me;” and she led me about a hundred yards from the house to the edge of a stream where two young women were bathing, to refresh themselves after the fatigues of spending a morning at the wash-tub. They were well-developed girls, with remarkably graceful figures, and, but for their features, which were rather flat to please a European eye, would have passed current for good-looking women. They were both unmarried, and either might have been purchased, I was told, for a few cows. Not dealing in that description of stock, however, I did not make a bid. We had not long returned to the house when the old lady again rushed forth with her jambok, and chevied an unfortunate native, and on her return gave me the explanation that a lazy, good-for-nothing Zulu from a neighbouring kraal kept, morning, noon, and night, hovering about his two countrywomen, and by his attentions and love-making prevented the indolent hussies from doing their work.

I could not help moralizing that there are more countries than Natal, in which the young men by their attentions prevent the girls from giving their undivided time to their allotted tasks.

CHAPTER X.

ZULUS.

OVER the door of the "Rising Sun" is a sign-board. After it was painted, I should imagine there must have been a dearth of brilliant-coloured pigments in the colony; and I doubt if the artist ever painted again, since I am convinced he must have exhausted all his skill in the production of this marvellous masterpiece. Three years ago I stood and gazed upon it with wonder and astonishment, and with undiminished awe I look upon it now. Since first I viewed it, that picture has haunted me in my dreams. The blazes of a certain unmentionable place, can scarcely surpass in intensity the vivid red and yellow of the rising luminary, and its surrounding clouds.

Crossing the drift, I pushed my way up the opposite slope, and, after ascending it, halted. How the scene brought back to my recollection my waggon and oxen. Here it was they stuck, for many a long hour, in spite of whip and imprecation. Oxen are indeed "kittle cattle," and sorely try the patience of their owner.



The Zulus Salute "MKose."

A couple of hundred yards further stands a solitary tree. The ways here divide, one portion going off to the north-east, and the other due north. The first leads to Ladysmith, and, consequently, Zululand; the latter goes to the Drachenberg, at Van Reenan's Pass, and thus is the high road to the Orange Free State and Western Transvaal.

It was not without a sigh and heavy heart that I took the last-mentioned, for every mile I traversed would separate me more and more from my countrymen in arms; for, though a soldier now no longer, yet often do I look back upon the days of my youth, when the tent was my home, and the bugle-call my *reveille*.

Before leaving this interesting spot a number of Natal Zulus approached me—handsome fellows, with the grandest development of limbs, and on their good-tempered features a genial smile. In their hands each has a bundle of assegais, and when they are abreast of me they range themselves in line, raise their right hand over their head, and salute me with the sublime title of “M’Kose,” or “Great Chief.” Then one advances from the rank, and hands me a document. This is a pass to permit him through our lines. I read it, and give him information with reference to the direction he must take, when all, with a short guttural sound—meaning farewell—wave their hands, and proceed on their way.

Whatever I may have thought of my attendant

previously, I am now convinced that he is an arrant coward, for his complexion has changed to a sickly hue, his limbs are trembling, and continue to do so until my Zulu friends are far off to the rear.

It has always struck me as strange that so very formidable a body of natives should have been permitted to travel about the land in time of war; yet I never heard of any outrage committed by them, which, to my mind, is a considerable proof of the loyalty of the Natal Zulu.

My route is "Forward," and as time is an object, I pull my mount together, and hurry on at a more rapid pace.

The horse I ride, and his companion which I lead, have evidently formed a strong affection for each other, each moderating his pace to suit the other, thus keeping as regularly abreast as if harnessed to the same conveyance; my boy riding within thirty or forty yards in the rear.

The more I see of my horses, the more I like them; and I will acknowledge myself to be an indifferent judge of horseflesh, if they do not prove themselves dowered with more pluck and endurance than falls usually to the lot of members of the equine family.

Suddenly my servant calls me. I retrace my steps to where he stands, when he points out to me a green mamba, nine or ten feet long. As this is one of the most venomous of South African reptiles, I dismount, handing over the

bridles of my horses, and proceed to give the snake the *coup de grace* with my revolver.

This was no easy matter, for my antagonist was active, and evidently disposed to give me battle. At length an opportunity presents itself, and my ball cuts him in two. But with the report Master Tommy breaks loose, and starts over the veldt at full gallop. I order my after-rider to pursue and capture the truant; but, although he does not hesitate to ride hard and fast along the road, he has a strong objection to risking his neck over the sward, where mere-kat and râtel holes might possibly, covered as they are by thick vegetation, give him an unpleasant spill. Thus there was nothing for it but for me to spring upon the bare back of his led horse, and, with nothing but a half hitch of the halter around the lower jaw, I careered over the plain like a Commanche or Raphahoe Indian.

But the runaway refused to be caught, moderating his pace as nearly as possible to mine, and turning either to the right or left the moment I attempted to shoot alongside. These futile efforts must have lasted nearly an hour, taking an immense deal out of both horses, when, finally, Master Tommy began to feel he had enjoyed the game long enough, and surrendered himself, with an expression of innocence in his eyes that prevented me from being over wrath on account of his delinquency.

But I had not come off scatheless, for the horse

I had ridden in this hunt was exceedingly high in the withers, and, consequently, for several days, I felt uncommonly uncomfortable when in the saddle.

As the sun went down I arrived at the "Dew-drop" tavern, owned by Mr. Disney, whom to hear speak a few words was sufficient to convince you that he is a gentleman.

In spite of Zulu scares, here he resided alone, not even happy in the possession of a stable-boy. Personally he assisted me to put up my horses, then laid the cloth for supper, cooked and served the repast, and ultimately turned down my bed with skill that would have done credit to the most professional of English cooks or chamber-maids.

Before retiring he took me into his *sanctum*, a neat little room, tastefully furnished, and decorated with many a photograph of absent relatives in his native country.

In such a position it was a pleasure to me to meet a gentleman, although I could not help feeling sad that Providence, in his inscrutable ways, should thus have compelled him to earn his living. May he soon make a fortune! But I fear time must elapse ere he succeeds in this, as he is many miles out of the course that our troops take on their way to Zululand, and therefore out of the route where money is most abundant.

The following morning, at sunrise, I was again in the saddle, and after three hours' climbing

reached the "Good Hope" tavern, kept by Mr. Pretorius. Here I breakfasted, my host beguiling the time by talking sedition against British rule, and grumbling at the want of protection afforded by the Imperial Government.

He was clamorous to know the last news from the front, predicted that the white man would be before long driven out of Africa, and did not hesitate to state his belief that dwellers like himself, in outlying districts, would inevitably be massacred before they could gain the haunts of their fellow-citizens.

When this lugubrious speech was finished, his wife, a very stout lady, and verging on her fiftieth birthday, fairly broke down and wept bitterly. Doubtless in imagination, she saw the assegais pointed at her matronly bosom, and conjured up hundreds of naked savages pillaging her homestead.

What could a gentleman do but attempt to console her, under these circumstances?

Alas! she, like Rachel, refused to be comforted, so I was obliged to give up my endeavours, for the more I tried to soothe, the more violent did her grief become.

Before reaching the "Good Hope," I omitted to state that an exceedingly pretty river is crossed, the banks of which are steep and precipitous. At one point there is what might be almost described as a peninsula jutting out into the stream.

Here stands the remains of what must have

been a large house; in places the walls have crumbled away, yet sufficient of the skeleton still exists by which an observer may gain a considerable idea of its original dimensions.

Around it is an extensive plantation of trees; and even now the eye can trace what was at one time a very handsome garden.

Here I halted to take a view of the surroundings, and while doing so was overtaken by a traveller. I asked him as to the early history of this deserted abode. "Yes," he answered, "I have heard my father say that the shattered dwelling which is before you was inhabited by a religious order of Jesuits; and here they lived for many years, till death took off the last of the devoted band. Then the place went to ruin, as I suppose there were none to replace them in so isolated a position."

At half-past two I left the "Good Hope," the traveller I mention accompanying me, as his destination was Harrysmith.

It is seldom that one picks up casually so agreeable an acquaintance.

Together we toiled over the Berg. Previously to this I had thought the scenery grand in the extreme, but now it appeared to excel the former estimate I had made of its beauty. It is a sea of mountains, extending so far that the eye can scarcely distinguish the outline of those more distant, which fade into haze on the horizon, whilst, between, hill after hill billows up upon the

landscape like waves upon the storm-tossed ocean.

I may mention, to give the reader an idea of the climate of this spot, that my companion, who upon a former journey had lost his watch, found it on this occasion, just as he had dropped it, all unstained by exposure to the atmosphere, although it had remained where it fell over two months before. One might imagine that life in such a place would go on for ever. The very idea of such a thing reminds me of a celebrated town in Iowa, of which, when marked off by the surveyor, a large portion was devoted for the purpose of a graveyard. As nobody died, it became a positive reproach to the inhabitants, for no grave was made within its limits for many a year; so they sent to a neighbouring State and borrowed a corpse, over the interment of which there were great rejoicings and much conviviality, and by this means removed the stain from their locality.

When our backs were turned upon Van Reenan's Pass, before the eye stretched one vast extent of veldt, here and there interrupted by several magnificent isolated hills. In no country of the world does nature appear to have indulged in such eccentric feats, so much so that I almost think that, if dropped here without a knowledge of my position, I should have no hesitation in deciding where I was.

As we approached the edge of Natal, for the Drachenberg Range is not its northern boundary,

on the left-hand side of the road may be seen a rude cross, and several mounds smothered in grass encircling its base.

My new friend perceiving that my eye rested inquiringly upon this memento of a past time, volunteered the information that there a fearful tragedy had been transacted some years ago.

"Ten or twelve Boers with their families were outspanned, on their course up to the interior of the Free State. A number of Basutos joined them, clamouring for food. This hospitality was liberally bestowed; but the cowardly villains were by no means satisfied, and turned upon their hosts, and slaughtered all excepting one, who was fortunate enough to escape to Harrysmith. He told his sad tale; still not a Boer could he obtain with pluck enough to return with him to bury his friends. However, there was an old Englishman, a carpenter by trade, residing there. Summoning his son to his assistance, they started for the scene of the massacre, and without further aid performed the last obsequies to the departed, and the cross you see was put up by his own hands to mark the resting-place of the unfortunate Boers, as well as a standing reproach to the Dutchmen of Harrysmith."

Long after night had fallen, we reached "Smith's Tavern," on the Vilder river. Report says the old gentleman is rich; whether this be the case or not, he is decidedly convivial, with a strong affection for England and its institutions.

At supper we were joined by two characters as unlike each other as can possibly be imagined. The first was a schoolmaster, a little dapper fellow, who took most kindly to his glass. On being asked by the host what he would have to drink : " Just gie us the square-face, and let me help mysel'. None o' yer drappies that ye can scarce drown a flea in, mon ! " was his reply.

The other was the " predicant," or preacher. He was a smooth-faced and oily, but powerfully-built, man, who refused, with many protestations of grief, to accept *spirits*, at the same time stating that he had no objection to ginger cordial.

To this concoction it was evident he was much attached from the frequency with which he replenished his glass. At length, to look after his horse, as he said, he went out for a few minutes.

As soon as his back was turned my curiosity prompted me to taste the ginger-cordial, that was evidently at the same time so innocuous and satisfying. By the piper that played before Moses ! the cordial turned out to be " Cape Smoke," and I vow that it was not one iota less than fifty above proof ! This dignitary of the church slept in the next room to me ; and never did I hear a man snore like him before, and trust I never shall again, for sleep was effectually banished from my eyelids, so that when I rose in the morning I was little or nothing refreshed by my " slumbers," in fact I felt *limp*.

CHAPTER XI.

ROUGHS.

It cannot be under twenty miles from "Smith's Tavern" to the town of Harrysmith, its distance from Durban being about 220 miles.

No part of the road which I have travelled have I found so monotonous and wearying as this stage of my journey. How to account for the languor which seemed to overcome me I can scarcely explain, unless it be from continually casting my eye over those interminable plains, that never cease until the Vaal river, which divides the Orange Free State from the Transvaal, is crossed.

When half the distance had been accomplished, the post-cart passed us *en route* to Maritzburg. If ever four unbroken devils of horses were put into harness, they were the brutes attached to this conveyance. Of course when they were doing their best pace they had no time for roguery; but as the driver wished to pull up to learn from me the last news from the war, he very nearly became possessor of a kettle of fish,

which he had difficulty in handling. One of the leaders got over the traces, a wheeler stood fast and did nothing but lash, while a third walked on his hind legs as if he were one of the great untamed rocking-horses which Miss Ada Menkin, or some of the celebrities of Astley's, used to ride in that well-known spectacular piece "Mazeppa." The result being that each of the passengers had to leave the cart, and hang on to the heads of these fiery steeds.

I dismounted to give a helping hand, and being under the impression that I could handle any obstreperous beast that ever was foaled, possibly rather too carelessly approached the one who had got himself over the traces. Without warning—in fact the whole thing was done so rapidly that I was completely taken by surprise—he let fly at me, and just grazed my elbow with his heels. Talk about "funny" bones! I certainly did feel undoubtedly *funny* afterwards; yet I would not be denied, and in a moment had my assailant by the head. He then playfully took me by the shoulder, and made such severe indentations with his teeth that I became anxious to reach Harrysmith, where I expected to obtain some "emplastrum diacolon." The last I saw of that post-cart was its former occupants hanging on behind, struggling with each other to regain their seats in the vehicle, the driver having once more got into motion, and fearing that a halt would occasion a repetition of the late scene to be enacted.

An hour and a half after this little episode, I entered the confines of Harrysmith.

From the number of new buildings that were being erected, it appears to be a prosperous place; yet why it should be so I have as yet been unable to discover, for no navigable river passes near it, nor do I believe that there is any prospect, even in the most remote future, of its becoming the terminus of a railroad.

Directing my steps towards the hotel, I met the landlord, a person with whom I had formerly become acquainted in the Transvaal. My previous introduction to him was rather a peculiar one. He had heard that an English gentleman was in the neighbourhood, so paid me a visit in the hope that I could prescribe for him for erysipelas, a disease from which he much suffered. I was loath to turn *Æsculapius*, and would have declined to accede to his request; but as no medical man was to be obtained within the radius of many, many miles I allowed myself to be persuaded to take his case in hand, and so successful was I that he regarded me as one of the most talented *medicos* that he had ever met. Consequently before I had been an hour in Harrysmith I had several applicants for my services. It is no easy matter to make a person see who has been blind for years, or a man stand whose legs had been useless for the same period; so I declined to meddle in a matter so far beyond my powers—a course of conduct which evidently did not lead to any extension of my popularity.

I have had some acquaintance with ruffianism, rowdyism, and localism, in various parts of America and Australia, but never, in the whole course of my previous existence, have I seen a greater number of blackguards than were to be found assembled in Harrysmith.

After supper I went into the billiard-room to smoke a pipe. The visitors to this establishment were such a rough, swearing, blaspheming collection, that I considered it advisable to regain the hotel, in case any should wish to draw me into a quarrel; but, early as I had resolved on taking this step, it did not prevent one of the *habitués* endeavouring to force me to take a drink with him, whether I would or not. A discussion having ensued as to the fairness of a "cannon," my tormenter left me, to see, as he expressed it, "fair play take place," thus affording me an opportunity to escape from so dangerous a locality. I was afterwards informed that six-shooters were very much in demand here, and that they not unfrequently performed a prominent part in the settlement of differences of opinion. I regret to say that many of these "roughs" were deserters from the English service; and, as no extradition treaty existed between the Orange Free State and the colony, these blackguards were safe from arrest. Several murders had occurred within the last year in the vicinity of the town, yet the authorities seemed powerless to punish the perpetrators of these crimes, or indisposed to bring the assassins to justice.

As my horses indicated a requirement of rest, I resolved to remain here for another day. Never shall I forget my astonishment when my bill was handed to me, immediately before starting. Half-a-crown a bundle for forage was charged; and so small was its size, that no one with a knowledge of how much a horse requires, could for a moment have doubted that two bundles at least were needed to make a fair feed for each animal.

As I was about to mount, a gentleman addressing me said, "Take my advice, sir, and see that your revolver is handy; for I have reason to believe that some of the blackguards who at present infest this town intend stopping you, they being under the impression that you have on your person a large sum of Government money."

I thanked him for the warning, and immediately afterwards cantered out of town.

The road from here lies over a succession of flats, with an occasional deep ravine intersecting them. On either side of the way were strewn the bodies of countless bullocks, that had died from fatigue, red water, or lung sickness, while vultures in hundreds, gorged with their foetid diet, flapped their wings, vainly endeavouring to rise at my approach.

All this carnage is the result of war, the unfortunate oxen having succumbed to an inexorable fate while trekking down supplies destined for our soldiers at the front.

At 1 p.m. I reached Mr. Langridge's, the

proprietor of the ferry-boat that crosses Elands river.

While lunching, he informed me that several suspicious characters had been about his establishment since sunrise, and consequently counselled me to change my route, and added that he would himself conduct me ten miles on the road. Thus, instead of crossing at the ford we followed the course of the stream for some distance, then crossing at a shallow drift, struck across the veldt. In an hour and a half the old road was once more regained, when my kind friend bid me good-bye and God-speed.

At sunset I began to imagine that I must have missed my way. For miles and miles I could see in every direction; but not a house was in sight. At length darkness set in, and I came to the conclusion that the veldt must be my sleeping-place, when a stranger on horseback overtook me.

From him I learned that I was still five miles distant from where I hoped to sleep that evening. However, as he was going some distance further, he volunteered to escort me until his residence was reached. I would fain have persuaded him to have accompanied me to my destination; but as he had lately entered into the bonds of matrimony, and was anxious to get home to his new wife, my request was not complied with.

"You cannot miss the way," he said. "Keep to the road, and in about half an hour you will see the lighted windows of the house you seek."

I did keep on for half an hour, but not a vestige of human habitation could I discover! For an hour more I rode with no better success.

Unwilling as I was to believe it, there remained no doubt in my mind that I had left the road, and was consequently wandering.

At length I got into a "sloot," the bottom of which was so soft that my horses were bedded up to the girthing in its slime and water; but a sharp application of spur caused the animal I rode to plunge forward, and in a few seconds I was again on *terra firma*; but my attendant was not so successful. The Dromedary, which name I had given to the big horse he rode, having deviated a little to the left, got into a regular quagmire; and in his efforts to extricate himself threw the boy—rifle, bandolier and all—into the strong-smelling cesspool.

I heard a cry, followed by a most earnest entreaty to come to his assistance; and when the luckless wretch was dragged out, I have seldom seen a human being present so woebegone an appearance. From head to foot he was coated with mud, and the usual *bouquet de nègre* in which he rejoiced was completely obliterated by the, if possible, more unpleasant, and decidedly more powerful odour, of the filth from which he was just rescued.

The horse having thrown him, took advantage of the circumstance to extricate himself, and started across the veldt, giving me at least a

quarter of an hour's pursuit before I could overtake him. When I had secured the truant I tried to find my boy, which was no easy task.

At length, after shouting until I was black in the face, I came across that worthy, grieving over the misfortunes which had befallen him, and loudly cursing his fate that compelled him to take service under so inexorable a taskmaster as myself.

If I could have managed the four horses alone, I should undoubtedly have turned him adrift there and then; but as I was unable to do so, I was fain to put up with one of the most useless specimens of humanity it has ever been my lot to be brought into contact with.

Having got the horses, and my dependent again mounted, I struck out upon the prairie, directing my steps more to the eastward. Soon after I regained the road, and to my extreme gratification saw the twinkling of a light. Straight to it, you may be sure, I went! But I calculated without my host, for both the horse I rode and the one I led fell over a wire fence, and precipitated me head foremost into a mealie field.

There being no result to be obtained by the process of weeping over the proverbial "spilt milk," I pulled myself together as quickly as might be, and got hold of each horse by the head. Ten minutes later I traversed the enclosure, and there quite a quarter of an hour was lost in seeking a place of exit; but my perseverance realized

its reward, and I was presently in the porch of Mr. Spettigrew's house, and the owner himself was kindly offering me that entertainment and rest of which I stood so sorely in need.

CHAPTER XII.

BOERS.

As there was no stable at the house where I was now guest, my poor horses were turned into the kraal, and a few mealies were all the food I could obtain for them, so in the morning, what between exposure and short commons, my pets looked anything but well. One in particular, the smaller of my attendant's beasts, had such a woebegone, tucked-up appearance that I resolved to part with him at the first opportunity that presented itself. Better to leave him behind here than further up country, where probably I should be unable to find a purchaser or a substitute. It was certainly rather soon in my journey—considerably under 300 miles—to find my nags giving evidence of hard work; but to my grief it was only too apparent to me that such was the case.

After a good breakfast I renewed my journey. The greater part of my ride was through a valley watered by a considerable stream. The country had a wonderfully repellant appearance, as the grass, far as the eye could see, had lately been

burnt off. However, spring-buck and bless-buck were numerous, but very wild ; so as I did not want meat, I refused to let my boy have a shot at the pretty creatures.

Presently a mad-looking individual, with long streaming hair and an enormous gun, galloped past me, intent on mischief to the antelopes ; he was splendidly horsed, yet looked more like an escaped lunatic than a sportsman.

Fervently, *sotto voce*, I expressed a wish that he had not brought out "straight powder" with him that day.

My servant soon after called to me, "Baas, come here and look at this enormous crocodile." After some trouble I discovered he was alluding to an iguana—a species of lizard—about five feet long. Verily his optics had a happy knack of turning mole-hills into mountains.

Soon after, descending a steep incline, I dismounted at a water-hole, to give my horses a drink. When so engaged a couple of Boers approached for a similar purpose. I asked one of them if he could direct, and tell me the distance, to my next halting-place. His answer, which he addressed to his friend and not to me, was—"Here's another d——d Englander come to spy out the land. If they think that they can annex the Orange Free State as they have done the Transvaal, they are confoundedly mistaken."

"Look here, Mynheer," he added, turning to me, "you had just as well take your beasts out of

that, and let a respectable citizen's drink ; time enough for yours after his have done."

I put my hand quietly into the right-hand pocket of my coat, just by way of assuring myself that my "Smith and Weston" revolver was ready for use ; not that I intended to commence hostilities, but to resent an insult if one should be offered me.

The black son of ebony who called me "Baas," either knew what the movement meant, or guessed what the expression of my countenance denoted, for he quietly slipped off up the hill side, leaving me, if a row took place, to protect my horses and do all the fighting by myself.

My experience has made me firmly believe that out of ten Boers nine of them are cowards, and evidently this pair of worthies did not differ from the majority of their countrymen, so, instead of clearing out, to make room for them, I kept my place, giving my weary beasts an opportunity of quenching their thirst, of as long a period again as I should probably have allowed them ; after which I laid down upon the grass close by, lit my pipe, and took stock of them.

These Boers are not unlike certain animals of prey that are to be met with further up country ; they cannot bear that a steady eye should be fixed on them, and when they perceive that such is the case, feel inclined to "make tracks." This was the first specimen of incivility I had met with, but well I knew that it would not be the last before

my journey was finished. When my troublesome friends had disappeared over the hillside, I tightened my girths, and having mounted Tommy, I attempted to drive the other three horses before me.

My intention was, if I could succeed in this course, to dismiss my servant, with the hope that fortune might throw in my way a lad who could better be depended upon; but the most fatigued and worn out of my team wandered incessantly to left and right, off the road on to the veldt. My man, perceiving this, and no doubt feeling inclined to chuckle at my failure, came and joined me. He said little, but evidently thought much; for after a period of silence, he remarked, "That Boer man would as soon shoot a coloured boy as he would a 'bok.'"

I did not upbraid him, for there is little use in throwing away an excess of language, simply for the sake of talking.

After a ride of about an hour, from the description I had received, I knew I was opposite Mr. Singer's house. It was a one-storied gothic building, with a very wide verandah running along the entire length of its front. I rode up to the door. In a pretty and carefully tended flower-garden stood a young lady, with a baby in her arms. Having received an affirmative answer to my request to be accommodated, I off-saddled my horses, and sent them round to the stable. Here there was forage galore, and a nice warm building to shelter my steeds.

I could not help looking at my hostess; again and again I took a sly glance at her, and only desisted when I feared she had observed my earnest gaze.

At length I exclaimed, "You must pardon me if you think I am staring at you; but you so much remind me of a lady in the Transvaal, whose hospitality I enjoyed for a couple of weeks some years ago, that I almost doubt now if you are not she."

"I have a sister there," she said.

"Thirty odd miles from Pourchestroom?" I inquired.

"Exactly," was the reply.

"Then you are Captain Gillmore, I suppose," she went on, "of whom I have often heard my sister speak. If you can only remain here a few days you will see her, as she is going to call for me on her way to Maritzburg."

Although I should have much liked to have seen my old friend, it was impossible for me to delay so long. The day after the morrow I should ride, and only did I delay for that period in order that my four-footed servitors might be recruited.

The husband had imported a large bagatelle-table, and until a late hour we all enjoyed playing upon it. It was a glimpse of home life—of those long happy evenings one spends in the native land—surrounded by relatives or dear friends. The life of a solitary wanderer is hard indeed—in

my belief, a person has to be peculiarly fitted for it, for the monotony of such a country as this, and the depression that appears to hang over the land, would drive some people mad.

African veldt, in some respects, resembles American prairie; in both there are the same gigantic stretches of grass-land, but the latter is bright and cheering, the former dreary in the extreme.

While at Mr. Singer's I was much struck with the number of waggons that passed, heavily loaded with wool. This is the staple produce of the country, and is destined for shipment at Durban, in Natal. The quantity which is taken to that port annually must be very great indeed; yet it does not equal, by one fourth, what is transported to Port Elizabeth, on Algoa Bay. This industry is, comparatively speaking, in its infancy; and I do not doubt that those who live to see another quarter of a century will find that Southern Africa has become a formidable rival to Australia in this article of commerce.

The necessity of our troops upon the frontier of Zululand has brought immense quantities of money into this Diminutive Republic.

Horned cattle, by tens of thousands, have been bought, and horses in innumerable numbers; the demand for these animals having been so great, that an ox, which a few years ago could have been purchased for five pounds, is at the present date considered value for twelve;

and, in the same way, horses have doubled or trebled their price.

To give an idea of the rascality of some of the residents in the Free State, I would fain tell a story which came under my knowledge.

Government emissaries had been scouring the country right and left for weeks, and by untiring labour had collected several hundred horses, which were at night placed in a kraal for their better safety, until the time arrived for sending them to Natal. On the morrow this was to take place, but to the astonishment and disgust of those in whose charge the animals had been placed, the kraal wall was discovered thrown down and nearly all the horses lost. Frequently afterwards I saw Boers riding on animals branded on the hoof and rump, but much as I should like to have despoiled the enemy of property which did not belong to him, being single-handed, I came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour.

At length the morning for departure arrived. Before sunrise I went to the stable to look after the saddling of my quadrupeds, where to my extreme disgust, I found that the invalid was unable to proceed, so I "swopped" him away for a white Basuto pony, strong as a cart-horse and hardy as a mule. He was a perfect type of the class of beast wanted for travelling in this country, possessed every known and unknown pace under the sun, and could go at the

rate of from five to six miles an hour for the livelong day.

I firmly believed that I had obtained a treasure, but a difficulty arose when least expected.

My favourites would not fraternize with the new comer, and never lost a chance to bite or kick him. Thus the poor little chap could not make himself comfortable among his associates, and never stayed any longer in their company than he could avoid, giving myself and boy much unnecessary trouble by this proclivity.

I arrived at mid-day at the “*Limouney Vley*,” lunched upon a box outside a diminutive dry-goods store; sardines, American biscuits, and beer at five shillings a bottle, being the component parts of my meal. Having stowed away my impromptu feed, I renewed my journey, and ere the sun went down had travelled about twenty odd miles more.

My halting-place had been so well described to me that I could not fail to recognize it, being, as it was, the handsomest residence I had seen since leaving Maritzburg.

It was the property of a Mr. Howell, from the Colesberg district in the old colony, and he has spent much time and trouble in ornamenting his new home with a quantity of fine trees and shrubs. An avenue of oaks led to his hall door; around his dwelling-house were blue gums, black wattles, and a great variety of fruit and shade trees; while in the rear was a prolific garden, well stocked with

useful as well as ornamental plants. On the left was a koppie surrounded by a Kaffir kraal, the apex of the hill being covered by numerous indigenous shrubs; and behind this was an enclosure of 2500 young trees promising, at no late date to form a handsome plantation. In front of the mansion was a large pond, covering many acres, supplied by a never-failing spring, the margin of which was closely planted with willows and poplars.

If anything could recompense a man for spending his life so far from the haunts of his fellow-countrymen, the possession of a homestead such as this would do so; but I fear that nine out of ten of my compatriots, whatever might be the results to be obtained, would agree with the French adage that "the game is not worth the candle."

CHAPTER XIII.

A MODEL FARM.

“ONLY left Natal on the 14th April?” ejaculated Mr. Howell, as we sat over our pipes after supper; “why, it took me nearly six months to come from the old colony here. But then I could not hurry, as I had a large stock of cattle and sheep.”

“No!” interrupted a pretty girl, who sat close to her father’s elbow, and carefully filled his pipe when that instrument of good fellowship required replenishing; “we were only four months and eight days on the journey.”

“Daughter,” said the old gentleman, “I wish you would attend to your sewing, and leave me to do the talking. When Mr. K—— comes here, I don’t interrupt your conversation with him.”

At this the little lassie blushed very red, and found an immediate occasion to enter the kitchen on the plea of looking after domestic matters.

“Yes, my friend, when I came here ten years ago there was not as much timber in the place as would have sufficed to light a fire. My neighbours were all Boers, who laughed at me and the

expense and trouble I took to supply the deficiency. I don't know that they would even now agree with me that my labour was not thrown away; for, with the exception of an occasional orange or peach tree, you never find anything in the shape of green wood about their premises. Every stone that my house is composed of I hewed out of the adjoining quarry, and had to work early and late, but I am quite satisfied with my reward."

"So you have been in America?" he went on; "come tell me about it. Before I got this place I had almost resolved to make that country my home." So we discussed prairie farming, back-wood life, and stock-raising, until the hour became so late that an adjournment was proposed.

Soon after daybreak my new friend knocked at my bedroom door, and asked me if I should like to see his flocks and herds before they were driven to pasture; to which proposition I heartily assented.

I had no idea previously that any person in this land possessed such a numerous stock. There were hundreds of Angola goats, hundreds of merino sheep, hundreds of horned cattle, and a great quantity of horses. What figure they represented in the aggregate it was an utter impossibility to form an idea during so short an estimate, but I should think, not a fraction less than 10,000/.

On returning to the house to breakfast, politics

were touched upon, when the old gentleman expressed his opinion, in the strongest terms at his command, that unless England interfered, and took the Free State into her hands, it would be as backward in fifty years time as it was at the present moment.

"Are you aware," said he, "that these Boers consider their youths to be fully educated when they have learnt to read the Bible, and perhaps have advanced as far as division in arithmetic? and that even at this date they grumble because they cannot wear skins for clothing as their fathers did; that they will not bank one farthing of the money they have received from the English Government, but keep it locked up in a box at their own houses; and that not one in a dozen would give you a receipt for money paid him, or write his name across a cheque drawn in his favour? Well, these are facts which nobody who knows the country will dispute. I am not posted in politics, like yourself or some of the big men at Cape Town, but I consider it a duty of civilizing England to take us under her protection. The other night I read the speech of Sir Bartle Frere, made to the Boers in the Transvaal. He is the right man in the right place, and tells the people what he means in language which they can thoroughly understand. I wish he would come along this way, for I should like to 'put him up.' There's nought in my house that I should consider too good for him."

So I cordially grasped the old man's hand, and told him that he exactly endorsed my own sentiments. Let political agitators cavil at the policy of this distinguished Statesman; the nation must ere long see and know that he is right, and that the course pursued by him was the only one which could have benefited our colonies in South Africa.

My love of birds took me for a stroll in the neighbourhood of the pond, which seemed to have been selected by every feathered denizen of the locality.

Pretty sombre-plumaged finches with scarlet bills were to be found in thousands; turtle-doves cooed from the branches and summits of every tree; the diminutive and retiring Hottentot duck floated in numbers over the pool's surface; hawks glided to and fro on silent pinion; while aloft, upon a dead bough, were perched two eagles, looking upon the scene with that proud gaze which a monarch may be supposed to assume when surveying the realms of which he is the sovereign. The elements of bloodshed were here, yet all was peace and repose.

I must not forget to narrate an amusing little circumstance that my host informed me of—namely, that there was a deficit of 70,000*l.* in the financial accounts of this model republic.

“And how do you think it occurred?” inquired he. “In this way. The majority of our office-holders, as you are aware, are Dutchmen;

few Boers being sufficiently educated to hold government positions. Well, these swiping, guzzling Hollanders have an exceeding great love for champagne, so champagne they had. That costs about 1*l.* a bottle out here; and if the whole sum was not expended in that drink, I believe most of it was!"

By nine o'clock I was in the saddle, my horses during the night having been fed, groomed, and well taken care of; so champed their bits, and indicated by their manner that they felt capable of doing a good day's work.

About mid-day I approached a house; and, on asking for a cup of water, a filthy, stout, and aged woman came to the "stoop," and questioned me as to the latest news of the war. When informed that a severe action had lately taken place, in which a large number of Zulus had been killed, she interrupted me before my sentence was finished with the query, "How many red-coats?" I told her a great many, at which she exclaimed, in ecstasies of delight, "Mooi! mooi! mooi!" (meaning "Excellent!"), clapping her hands with pleasure the while.

This road now became even less interesting; for in many places obtruded from the surface of the soil enormous rocks, some of which reminded me strongly of Stonehenge, although possibly I had to stretch my imagination in reference to the regularity of position that each stone occupied.

I observed a new variety of "koran" on these

flats, which, unlike its representative further to the southward, a black bird, is here a brown-coloured species, and which is, if anything, larger in size than the other. In my former journeyings in the interior of Africa I have shot many of this family, and therefore know them all tolerably well; but this is by far the most handsome I ever met with. They belong to the Bustard class, and like all that race, are so much addicted to running that it is difficult to get them to lie before a setter or pointer. However, should hours of labour grant you a success, you have obtained a prize which would delight the soul of a veritable gourmet.

Pauw, a larger bird, belonging to the same naturalist's classification, I have not seen many of; and this I attribute to the lateness of the season, as they are well known to be partially migratory. They are another of the *bonne-bouches* which the African veldt yields occasionally as a meal to the tired and exhausted traveller.

At a turn of the road I suddenly meet with a party of Kaffirs on horseback, swaddled in their numerous blankets or skin carosses, and mounted on their miserable half-fed ponies. They look at once a conquered race, just as they are, no more resembling the Zulu of Natal or Zululand than a slave does his task-master.

At one time the Free State possessed a large native population; kraals, in those days, abounded on every hand, and a farmer had no difficulty in obtaining labourers; but the Boer's brutality, cupidity,

and want of faith, have driven these people away, and labour is scarcely obtainable to perform the most trivial services. From morning to night you hear one common source of complaint : “ How can a farmer succeed or make money if no workmen can be got to assist him ? ” Never was the adage of the “ goose with the golden eggs ” more thoroughly verified than it is here ; and what commiseration can be felt for the sufferers, when they have been themselves the fabricators of the difficulty ? I am not prepared to say that the mode of managing native affairs is perfect in Natal ; but one thing I *do* know, that it can never be laid to our doors that we treated the black population of *our* colony as beasts of the fields, or brutes of burthen. The Zulus of Natal, during our late war, gave us little assistance, it is true ; but if they did not commit themselves to overt acts of hostility towards our enemy, they afforded us, on the other hand, no grounds of uneasiness with reference to their loyalty.

After a tedious and most fatiguing ride, during which I was frequently informed that Heilbrun was close at hand, I observed the object of my search seven or eight miles in front of me, spread over a large flat, the position of which was marked by Eland’s koppie, which stood out in bold relief on the adjoining veldt.

On descending the side of a slope, a person, who spoke English fluently, requested me to come to a neighbouring house.

In front of the door stood a rude unfinished coffin, fashioned by no skilled hand. My eye rested inquiringly upon it, which my new acquaintance observing, volunteered the information that the owner of the adjacent establishment had either met with an accident or been murdered; which had been the case, however, neither he nor his friends could decide.

Immediately afterwards I was introduced into a darkened room, where lay the body of a stalwart Boer, his head disfigured by a ghastly wound. The injury might have been the result of a blow, or just as possibly a fall from his horse.

It was known that he had been drinking heavily at a canteen in the vicinity, but had taken his departure from there, in the company of a stranger, in no worse a condition of inebriety than usual. The horse he rode had the reputation of being exceedingly attached to its owner, and was remarkable for its surefootedness, while the stranger he travelled with was unknown, and had not been seen since the casualty occurred. The circumstances led them to conclude that there were good grounds to suppose there had been foul play; yet on those vast flats, where human beings seldom travelled after night, how improbable would it be that witnesses could be obtained or a just decision arrived at. . . .

In an hour and a half I reached the Temperance Hotel, Heilbrun.

It is a busy little town of late growth, and

promises fair to become, some day, a place of importance. It is built so as to form four sides of a square, and the numerous waggons, loaded with wool, that were outspanned in the centre of the town, indicated that trade was prosperous.

Many of the shops were large brick buildings, and would have done credit to Durban or Maritzburg.

As is usually found in these out-of-the-way settlements, the majority of the traders were either colonial or British by birth. From many I received a most hospitable welcome, while the landlord of the hotel did all in his power to make me comfortable; not forgetting, however, in respect of charges, to take the sinister translation of the scripture quotation. I was a stranger, and he "took me in."

CHAPTER XIV.

INHOSPITALITY.

I HAD given strict injunctions to my boy that, if he had become conversant with the object of my mission into the interior of Africa, he was to be perfectly mute upon the subject to all strangers with whom he might be brought into contact.

Knowing the country well as I did, and its unsettled state, I had reason to believe that obstacles would be thrown in my way, to prevent the successful accomplishment of the duties imposed on me ; and thus I resolved to be "Mr. Smith," a possible speculator in land, or settler looking out for a new farm. But well devised as were my plans, this useless addition to my *cortége*, whether to enhance his own position, or to have additional lustre reflected upon him by his serving a person of importance, heralded my arrival broadcast throughout the community, and proclaimed me a swell of no ordinary magnitude. The result being, that in the evening the front of the hotel, which stood in the centre of the principal thoroughfare, was passed and repassed, at least a dozen times, by

the leaders of the *bon ton*, with a hope that they might catch a glimpse of the live lion which had been suddenly precipitated amongst them.

Nor was this all. After supper, the smoking-room was crowded with merchants and government officials, the tenour of the latter's conversation being exactly such as would be adopted by persons desirous of originating a disturbance.

So I slipped away and paid a visit of inspection to my horses, that I might be sure they were all right, immediately afterwards retiring to bed, with a book and a pipe, to enjoy my well-earned repose. At an early hour of the morning I was once more under weigh.

The country was more “rolling” than it had previously been; and, altogether, the incidents which occurred were of a more exciting character.

The first of the latter was ludicrous in the extreme. My attendant purchased at Heilbrun a pair of spurs. These he wore, and doubtless considered himself no end of a swell. I had called him alongside, to reprove him for having disobeyed my instructions. As might have been anticipated he denied, in the strongest terms, backed by the most weighty of oaths, that he had been guilty of the offence with which he was charged. Not desiring to have an argument on the subject, I ordered him to sharpen his pace, as we had a long ride before us. On doing so, he struck the big horse that carried him with his spurs. The animal, in consequence, buck-jumped, and sent

his rider spread-eagle fashion over his head. He fell on his face, and when he arose all the more prominent parts of his physiognomy had got the skin most thoroughly rasped off. It was wonderful to see how many pegs this trifling episode took him down in his own estimation.

A few miles further I required a glass of water, so stopped at a farmhouse to obtain one. If the dwelling was itself filthy, its habitants were even more so. When I requested water, a consultation was held among the inmates, and immediately afterwards the door was slammed in my face.

Being conscious that I had done nothing to deserve such treatment, I knocked sharply at the door, when a hairy-visaged, beetle-browed, tobacco-chewing scoundrel, poked the muzzle of a rifle out of the window, and ordered me to be off in language, which although Dutch, was sufficiently explicit. The enemy was in good cover; I, in the open and unprotected; so I came to the conclusion that I could scarcely be accused of cowardice if I continued my journey.

I have, however, no hesitation in saying that I felt irate—nay, would even have been gratified to have had this wretch out on the veldt, that I might have given him such a pommelling as so inhospitable a villain well deserved.

“It never rains but it pours” is not an unfrequent expression, and is one in which much truth lurks. In passing along the edge of a steep hill-

side, where the road was narrow, I met half-a-dozen Boer teamsters, toiling along at their usual slow pace, who, when they perceived me coming, drew their waggons across the road in such a position as prevented my passing them.

I remonstrated, and spoke feelingly and impressively on my right of road.

My harangue they considered to be intensely diverting, and laughed immoderately at the difficulty in which I was placed.

As these disputants of my path were clearly not in a hurry, or disposed to remove the obstructions which they had placed in my way, I was of necessity compelled, with no very good grace, to make a *détour* of nearly half a mile.

The next part of my route lay along a river-bed; at an abrupt turn I found myself in front of a farmhouse, substantially constructed out of stone; and as I was thirstier than ever, I knocked at the door, but received no answer.

Riding round to the back of the premises, I perceived several white children playing with an equal number of young Kaffirs. The moment they set eyes upon me, uttering a shriek, they bolted off to hide themselves among the reeds and other *débris* that margined the water-course.

At length I tempted a little girl forth by holding up, between my finger and thumb, a small silver coin. This acted as a talisman, and the little naked white savage came tremblingly to me, and although suffering from undoubted fear, after a

delay of many minutes procured me what I so greatly stood in need of.

Over the flats that I traversed, later in the day, I saw large droves of spring-bok and bless-bok, a certain indication that farms were becoming less numerous and sportsmen less to be dreaded.

From some oversight I here missed my way, and did not discover my mistake until I had proceeded for several miles to the westward of my route.

The inhabitants of a cabin, more civil than any I had previously met, kindly directed me how to reach the main track, which I fortunately regained after an hour's ride.

In front of me was a waggon slowly toiling up an incline. Sharpening my pace, I was about to pass it, when a stentorian voice shouted out my name.

I looked at the speaker, but could not succeed in recognizing him.

At length he dismounted from his perch on the waggon-box, and advancing towards me held out his horny hand. I looked and looked again.

Could it be possible? It was Mr. Greet, a German trader, whom I had last seen in Matabeleland.

He was *en route* from Natal to the interior, and had suffered no inconsiderable pecuniary loss from his cattle being attacked by the numerous ailments that oxen suffer from in the vicinity of the sea-coast.

Soon after we overtook his leading waggons, when we enjoyed a hearty lunch, which terminated with a stirrup-cup of "square-face."

At this out-spanning place no less than three of his cattle were down, and it did not require an experienced eye to see that they had trekked their last trek.

Thus he had to mount his horse and go scouring about the country to endeavour to supply their places. If his statement was correct, he had already lost thirty-five head of cattle, each of which at present prices was worth upwards of twelve pounds—rather rough work upon a poor man!

From this person I got some most useful information with respect to the state of the interior. All traders, with scarcely an exception, had been driven out of Bechuana and Matabele-land after the Isanwala disaster, and but for his long residence in Lubenguelo's country, and the terms of friendship he was on with that chief, he would never have dreamed of daring to revisit it.

I informed him of a portion of my plans, when he most urgently begged me not to think for a moment of making such an attempt, for if I did so I should be sure never to return.

The sun had gone down when I reached Friedel Ford. But one store stands in this diminutive hamlet. To this I directed my steps, and found the proprietor at home. He kindly offered me accommodation; but, as he had no stables, a

neighbouring Boer was sent for, who promised to put up my horses and feed them well. His ideas of good feeding and mine did not agree; but, as I had no other alternative, I left my beasts in his charge.

Later on a waggon halted in front of my host's. At the enormous sum of 3s. each I obtained twelve bundles of forage. This forage, I may here mention, consists of oat straw, upon which the grain still hangs, but has failed to ripen; and, with this, satisfied myself as to the comfort of my weary-footed friends.

The landlady was good-looking, young, and musical; and the few hours which I spent between supper and my retirement to roost, were a most agreeable contrast to many of those hitherto experienced on my journey.

The only damper to the enjoyment of my visit here was the aggravated size of the bill presented me by the Boer in the morning, for the feed and keep of my horses and boy during the previous night. That a Boer will never pay a fair price for anything he buys, nor accept a just remuneration for anything he supplies, is received as a maxim by those foreigners who reside amongst them, and one which ought to be remembered by such travellers as circumstances may chance to bring in contact with them.

CHAPTER XV.

FRIEDEL FORD.

THE final words of instruction given me on leaving Friedel Ford were: "You will reach the Vaal river in about an hour. There is no possibility of making a mistake, as all the roads, pointing to the north, lead to it." For five or six miles I rode over the same uninteresting country, frequently passing through large flocks of sheep and goats. Much cannot be said in reference to the condition of these animals, and their dispirited and weary appearance only seemed to be exceeded by the abject misery of the natives who acted as herdsmen. This life may suit a Kaffir, but I should imagine it would soon have the effect of driving a white man out of his mind.

Earnestly I looked for the promised river, but not a vestige of it could I see. However, a marked change in the features of the country was becoming apparent, for distant koppies rose above one another, each a mass of rock and parasitical vegetation.

"Just like my luck," I exclaimed. "I have

lost my way, and doubtless shall lose several hours before I regain it, which will prevent all hope of my reaching Pourchestroom to-night; and, as I am not aware of any resting-place existing between here and that town, I shall be compelled to sleep on the veldt."

Such I know will frequently have to be my fate, but I do not wish to commence it before I am obliged. While passing over a swell in the ground, I perceived several hyænas taking a most careful and interested observation of the flocks which were scattered over the ground below them. Until I got within 150 yards of these freebooters, they regarded my presence with indifference, but soon withdrew behind the crest, when their vicinity could only be detected by the occasional view of a round head, surmounted by a large pair of tulip ears.

It is seldom that I allow an opportunity of taking a shot at these rogues to pass—the most cowardly, yet bloodthirsty, of the carnivora of Africa; but expedition being absolutely necessary, I grudged the time I should lose if I put my custom into practice. Half an hour's further riding did not bring me in view of the Vaal; but, as I saw a good-looking and substantial farmhouse close at hand, I resolved to visit it, with the hope of obtaining information which might guide me in my search.

Several large, vociferous, and ill-mannered dogs rushed out to meet me, and it was not without

difficulty that I prevented them laying hold of my horse's legs. At length one, more venturous than his fellows, came within kicking distance, when Bobby, who was being led at the time, let him have both hind-feet square in the face. The brute was knocked topsy-turvy, and I don't doubt that he had marks upon his figure-head that he would bear for many a day to come. This clever performance of my horse effectually frightened the others, who slunk off growling, towards their owner's residence.

Having ridden up to the porch, a fine specimen of an old man, so fat and rotund in person as to be almost a curiosity, welcomed me most civilly. His costume was between that of a sailor and a buccaneer. In his hand he held a veritable Dutch china pipe, while on a table, at his elbow, was a jug and tumbler, the latter half-filled with something that looked exceedingly like thick, muddy, home-made wine. This veteran spoke English fairly, and politely requested me to dismount. I did so, and, producing my pipe, prepared for a pow-wow, as experience has told me, if you want information from a Boer, you must never attempt to hurry him.

My host was altogether so pleasant, and well-posted on the principal subjects of the day, that I became a charmed listener to his conversation. He knew I was an Englishman, and hinted broadly that he surmised me to be a Government servant. After which he launched out into the

desirability of my country taking the destinies of the Free State into its hands. He was an advocate for roads, railways, and other improvements, "For," added he "they will enhance the value of our land, and such things never will be made so long as we have a Boer Government. There are as many in the Free State for you as there are against you; and if any fighting has to be done to accomplish the end in view, why let us do it among our ourselves, and save your soldiers for keeping the Zulus and Kaffirs in order."

"How far," inquired I, "is it to the Ford across the Vaal river?"

"About fifteen miles," was the laconic reply.

"Can I get to Pourchestroom to-night?"

"Just possible, with fresh horses, and riding as if the devil were at your heels!"

Knowing that such severity of pace was more than my jaded animals could undertake, and that if I was barbarous enough to attempt such a performance they would become useless for further work without a lengthened rest, I dismissed the idea of reaching Mooi River Dorp until the morrow.

When about to bid the friendly old gentleman good-bye, he insisted on my remaining to join him at dinner. On my consenting to this proposal, he shouted with stentorian lungs to his Frau, who on making her appearance was instructed to lay another place at table.

Up to this moment it seemed that the inmates

of the house had been unaware of my arrival; for no sooner had the good woman disappeared than five buxom, blooming daughters, ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-four years, came out to shake hands with the stranger.

Why is it, I wonder, that in this land everybody shakes hands with everybody else? If you go into a store you shake hands with the salesman, the master, and with each of the customers in rotation—dirty paws being the usual condition! It is frequently, on this account, far from a pleasing mode of salutation.

However, the ladies in this particular case were all exempt from this drawback, and all were sufficiently clean and tidy to have made even the more familiar embrace and osculation things I should far from have objected to. It is extraordinary how many little matters these charming young ladies found to do on the verandah all of a sudden. One discovered that the parental pipe required filling; a second that the wine was exhausted, and that the stranger must needs be thirsty; a third that an extra wine-glass was required, &c.

While these attentions were being shown me, a Kaffir, intent on taking life, pursued, with relentless energy, an unfortunate fowl, which was knocked over with his knobkerry, which trifling episode told me that in lieu of "corn bread and common doings," we were to enjoy the, to me, unwonted luxury of "chicken fixins."

Judging from the "heft," height, and pink-white complexions of these mädchen, I concluded that the country and mode of life pursued must be healthy in the extreme.

"You are not a Boer?" said I, addressing the old man.

"No! no!" answered he; "I am a Hollander."

After which he told me he had been a sailor in former days, and that before giving up that profession he had commanded his own craft. "I would have kept to the sea for some years longer, but off Dassen Island my only son, a fine lad of eighteen, was washed overboard."

Here a tear moistened the poor man's eye; but he continued, "I couldn't bear the life after that, so I sold all I possessed and came here. It is so long ago, that I do not feel it so keenly now. It was only yesterday I was saying to the old woman that I should like to take a look at the sea again. I think she hankers after it too, for we were both born and brought up at the Texel."

The interior of the house was as clean as soap and paint could make it, and as neat in its internal arrangements as the cabin of a ship.

The meal provided was excellent of its kind: fowls, sauerkraut, and salt-fish salad—the latter great favourites of mine, and forming an important feature on the board.

With deep regret I shook hands with the host and hostess; and, on bidding them adieu, "busked" all the lasses round, who received the salutes in

the most matter-of-fact manner in the world ; then vaulted myself into the saddle, and loathfully, if I may say so, resumed my journey.

After my recent experience in the want of civility, inhospitality, and occasional barbarism of the Boers, my heart beat gratefully that, before leaving the civilized world behind me, I had once more met with a reception the remembrance of which I should cherish in my mind through the approaching period of isolation I was entering upon ; and which could not fail to enhance my hope of a safe return to those friends who had themselves small expectation of seeing me again in the land of the living.

I may mention here a point in my character which has helped to carry me through much peril, and one which I believe myself eminently to possess—namely, a confidence in my power to overcome difficulties, however appalling they may appear at the time, which prevented the prognostications of evil on my behalf from overwhelming me, and robbed the prophesied terrors of half their awe.

We all know how wonderfully clean, neat, and industrious the inhabitants of Holland are ; is it, then, not extraordinary that their descendants in South Africa are generally exactly the reverse ? As here, so it is in the United States of North America.

A Dutch settlement may be thrifty, and the farms admirably cultivated ; but dirt and disorder

will be invariably discovered by the visitor to reign paramount.

Through the distant koppies, which I had seen earlier in the day, I now wended my way.

On their southern face numerous farms occurred, sheltered by orange, lemon, and peach-trees; mealie fields stretched on each side of the roadway, and from a margin of grass I flushed quail at every few yards.

This sudden change was as wonderful a contrast as jumping from winter into summer, for here all was bright and beautiful, while the veldt behind me was a treeless, withered waste of sunburnt grass.

To my right flowed the noble Vaal river—one long and uninterrupted stretch of clear water, sparkling translucent in the sunshine, and adding a glowing radiance to the landscape.

In my course I passed several people, who appeared to view the stranger with distrust, although they answered my inquiries with civility. But the "Drift," where is it? Not here. The water is far too still and deep for man or horse to attempt to ford it.

Another weary hour passes, and the scene changes again. Now the Vaal is a rushing torrent, a gigantic rapid that would occupy no ignominious place among the grand rivers of North America.

Ultimately what appears to be a natural dam is reached; beside it stands a miserable tent and

hut, and near to a fire in their vicinity sit two ragged children, who are the son and daughter of an itinerant blacksmith.

The boy, a bright-eyed little fellow about ten years old, volunteers to pilot me across the drift, and strips himself for that purpose.

I give him hold of Tommy's halter when he enters the stream, and with a pole, which he holds in his hand, cautiously feels his way.

In ten minutes I am at the other side safe and sound, although the water has in several places come up high enough to wet my saddle-flaps.

A florin, which I present to my juvenile guide, delights him immoderately, for he smiles incessantly as he surveys it. Probably the poor little fellow never was so rich before, and anticipates in imagination what a host of luxuries he will be able to purchase with so much money.

When I say adieu, he turns round and rushes to the stream, and splashing, wading, half-swimming, and waking the echoes with his shouts of merriment, more like a water-spaniel than a human being, he returns to his miserable home.

For some time we wound among koppies, or through dark ravines, heavily timbered on either side, and just such places as may be expected to be the haunts of savage animals. Doubtless, a few years ago they were so, but the rifle and poison have now driven the marauders from their original strongholds.

The country, later on, becomes more open.



A Welcome Addition to the Commissariat.

As the sun is about to go down, I pass one of the most charmingly situated farms that I have seen in South Africa. A large pond of clear water fronts the house, and at the back is a limpid stream. The building is thatched, and the eaves project far beyond their supports. Fruit-trees, dense and numerous, surround it, and the dark green foliage of the orange and lemon form a pleasant contrast to the snow-white walls.

"Forty miles still from Pourchestroom, did you say?"

"Yes—it is a good six hours' ride."

"Thanks for your information. Good-bye."

It may be worth explaining here, that a Boer calculates distance, not by miles, but by hours, six miles being considered a fair hour's journey.

Half an hour before the sun went down we dismounted, knee-haltered the horses, and turned them loose upon the veldt to feed.

Soon a fire was sending up its circling smoke towards the heavens; and although we had nothing to eat, the surroundings made a very home-like appearance. Immediately before dark a Kaffir passed.

He was armed with a gun, and carried on his back a klip-springer, of which a little inducement on my part caused him to sell me a hind-quarter; without pepper, and without salt, and without bread, I enjoyed that meal, for constant exercise in the open air had made me really hungry.

CHAPTER XVI.

MOOI RIVER DORP.

THAT night was one of the longest I ever passed in my life, for my body had become unaccustomed to having the earth for a bed and the heavens for a canopy.

Mosquitoes were also numerous, and of that daring, persevering, and exploring kind, which discovers a way to every part of your unfortunate body. Moreover, my attendant would not, or could not, sleep; and, as if out of a pure spirit of devilment, seemed determined to prevent my doing so either.

The horses, again, were restless, and appeared to suffer considerably from exposure. Several times Bob, who was an extremely nervous brute, made violent efforts to break loose. This, no doubt, was the result of his seeing or scenting some animal with which he was not familiar. Soon after midnight I and the boy got at loggerheads, for he began grumbling over the hardness of a fate that condemned him to sleep out on the veldt, like a beast of the field, with nothing

more for his supper than a piece of tough old buck.

These murmurings appeared to me very much like mutiny and insubordination, which I forthwith told him, not being very choice, but exceedingly explicit in the language I used.

After many weary hours of watching, the eastern sky became more and more illuminated, and I witnessed one of those glorious sunrises that are frequent in this portion of the world; but unwashed, unkempt, and sleepless, as I was, I doubt much if I admired it as I ought to have done.

Poetry and romance are all very well in their way, but hardship is not conducive to nurturing them.

A couple of hours were granted my horses to feed. The veldt was sun-baked, and the grass withered and brown, yet the animals seemed able to pick up an occasional mouthful of sustenance.

The country, I learn, has been long without rain, and if such be the case in the lands beyond the Transvaal, that I am about to visit, how will my pets live?

It is a serious subject to think upon, so I will let the evil be sufficient for the day thereof.

The time has come to ride. Saddling is expeditiously performed, and once more I am mounted, directing my course northward. For miles I ride through droves of horned cattle, many

of which are so low in condition as to appear a mass of skin and bone.

As the day advances I overtake bullock-waggons, carts, and equestrians ; for it is Sunday, and all the good folks are wending their way to their respective places of worship. At home, from the appearance of the surroundings, any one can recognize that it is the Sabbath ; and even here, so far beyond the haunts of traffic and commerce, where everything is natural and unaltered by the skill of man, I almost believe that this day can be detected. There was a placid stillness that reigned over everything, and whispered in my ear, “ This is the seventh day, and therefore the day of rest.”

The largest Kaffir kraal I have yet seen on this trip I rode through about eleven o'clock. The inhabitants were nearly all dressed in European clothes, and the gorgeousness of their colouring gave such brilliancy to the scene as to remind the observer of a “ Watteau ” picture. A mile or two further the hilly ground terminated, and before me stretched an immense plain, bounded on the horizon by elevated ridges of hills, while in the centre of the flat reposed embedded in hundreds of green trees, Pourchestroom, known by the Boer population as Mooi River Dorp. The termination of this stage of my journey appeared the longest and slowest part of my route.

At length the ford over the Mooi river is reached. On its margin are several emigrant

waggon, while close at hand, on the overhanging banks, are seated upwards of a couple of dozen of men, women, and children. When questioned, I am informed by them, that some are from the old colony, and some from the old country, and that they are proceeding to take possession of farms beyond Haute Marico. Of the tedium and slowness of their journey they complained sadly; but they all appeared to look forward to a happy future. How many of them will ever return to the homes of their infancy is a question neither you nor I, reader, can solve.

The scenery surrounding me is not unattractive, and I should imagine at an early date this immense valley or plain will be richer in agricultural wealth than any other part of the Transvaal.

Here the grass does not grow in bunches scattered widely apart, as it is found in the northern portion of our new territory; consequently it can support three or four head of cattle on a space that would only feed one further to the northward. Then the soil, instead of being sand, is a fine loam, eminently suited for the cultivation of cereals. A few years back, in spring, I rode with a friend across its undulating slopes, and was much struck with the number and variety of wild flowers that decked this plain.

In a fever of excitement my boy calls my attention to a large drove of bless-bok, feeding close to the road. Although it is Sunday, he requests permission to shoot at them. That I could not

grant; for they are a semi-tame herd, the property of my old friend the Landdrost. This gentleman is most generous in granting permission to his friends to shoot, but has a strong objection to strangers trespassing upon his preserves in pursuit of game. Nor is this to be wondered at when it is known that it costs many a pound annually to protect them from the pursuit of teamsters and transport-riders, whose sole desire is to obtain the hide and leave the carcase rotting on the veldt.

In the Mooi river good fishing is to be obtained. Yellow-fish, and Siluridæ, erroneously here called barbel, are abundant, and grow to a great size. Near the margin of this river, and further down its course than where I crossed it, are several large marshes well stocked with snipe and duck. Reed-bok are not unfrequently found also in these meadow-lands; while partridge, quail, and several other varieties of game, can be shot on all the hill-sides. The ordinary sportman—that is, the one who does not crave to kill animals as big as bullocks—will find Pourchestroom pleasant shooting quarters; but I fear that it will not continue long so, for its population is rapidly increasing.

As time passes, my craving for food reminds me that I have not eaten since yesternight; so I say a word of encouragement to my ponies, shake my reins, and canter into the town. Respectable citizens and burghers, just leaving their places of worship, turn round and regard me with expressions of wonder as I hurry on. My dirty ap-

pearance and soiled clothes, if it were not for the excellence of my animals, would stamp me in their minds as a thorough outsider; but a Boer and an Africander know a good horse when they see it, and their heart seems to expand towards the owners of such animals.

At length the hotel is reached. The gentlemanly and hospitable proprietor receives me, and "*Mr. Smith's*" horses are sent to the stable, and himself shown into a clean and comfortable bedroom.

My opportunities for tubbing had not been numerous on the road. A little water in the diminutive wash-bowl is generally the only utensil I could procure in which to perform my ablutions, thus it is not to be wondered at that I spent an hour in my endeavour to remove the dust and soil which had accumulated upon my person during my long ride.

My boy brushed me, the servants brushed me; and it was not until I had passed through all these different hands that I considered I was presentable to the eyes of the respectable citizens and citizenesses of the principal town of our new colony.

The name of Smith did not "go down" here. At luncheon I observed a person carefully eyeing me. At length he called the proprietor, and asked my name. The answer was "Smith;" but the seeker for information did not appear satisfied, for he exclaimed, in angry tones, "Damn Smith! why, it is Parker Gillmore!"

As there were several persons in this community whom I had severely and (as I consider) rightly castigated in my last work, I had a fear that if by chance we were thrown in contact a disturbance might ensue. But in this I was mistaken; for those to whom I had given offence preferred not trying issue on the subject by physical strength.

Here I spent two days. My horses needed a rest, as well as new shoes. My attendant was not in the most brilliant state; and as for myself, I felt that I should benefit by a short inaction. Thus it was Tuesday morning when I again started, directing my course towards Klerksdorp, a village over thirty miles distant, and where I expected to obtain from an acquaintance important information in regard to distant Kaffirland.

When I had proceeded about three miles I pulled up my horses, and took a good survey of the now distant town. It had increased in magnitude since last I viewed it far beyond expectation. I could not help exclaiming to myself, "Let the Boer say what he chooses; two years under the just and paternal care of my country has done more for this place than twenty-five would have accomplished under its previous form of government."

Renewing my course, as the day was still young, I rode leisurely forward. Every stick, stone, and landmark was familiar to me, and recalled a thousand memories, far more sad than happy, of the

past. The journey I now hoped to accomplish before the sun went down, had taken me on my earlier visit here, four days. I was alone on the occasion, and had just parted from my dear friend Morris, broken down with sickness, and compelled to return to his native land. Yes ; only four years have passed since then, and how much older—and certainly not happier—do I feel ! But whom do I see trudging along the road, through dust and heavy sand, with a tropical and uncompromising sun pouring down upon her head ?

It is a white woman, and poor indeed and friendless must she be when she is compelled to walk.

When we meet, a few inquiries inform me of the strait to which she is reduced. She has walked the whole way from the Diamond Fields, a distance of over two hundred miles, in search of employment. Her husband she has left behind ill, and now is seeking work, to enable her to bring him to a land in which she hopes he will enjoy better health. This poor soul knew no one, has never been here before, yet she has a heart and pluck which would do credit to many of the sterner sex.

I could not help feeling pity for her, so gave her a trifle to assist her in procuring a resting-place when she reached her destination.

Soon afterwards I observed a Cape cart, the horses of which were grazing by the roadside ; and on reaching it, discovered a gentleman,

quietly smoking a cigar, and lounging against the splash-board. He was an old acquaintance, so I off-saddled, and spent half an hour in his society.

An hour from here I reached a canteen, a temporary erection, principally composed of corrugated iron. Around its doors was assembled a motley crowd of the lowest type of the white and black population. All were more or less intoxicated, although the sun had scarcely more than reached the zenith!

It was a beastly sight, and one which I hope will cease to be so frequent in this land.

Legislature has but to take hold of this crying evil, and soon its termination will ensue. I have seen such sights in Canada and the United States. One cabin, situated in a pine wood in the State of Maryland, was vividly brought to my recollection. There the proprietor, with a revolver in his belt, and a bowie-knife in his sleeve, sold to all who desired, spirits so villainous and so strong, that a neighbouring resident, in speaking of the subject, said that he would "warrant it to kill as fast as a six-shooter."

Further on I crossed "Cucumber Spruit." On my last visit here, one of my waggons stuck for twenty-four hours, and, but for the kind assistance of a traveller, might have remained in that position for a week. Around its margin now were encamped a host of natives, all of whom were on the return journey from the Dia-

mond Fields, many being inhabitants of Matabele, Mashoona, and Makalaka country. Hundreds of weary miles were still before them; and although this distance had to be traversed on foot, they were as happy, in the anticipation of returning to their homes, as schoolboys about to visit the paternal roof at the commencement of the holiday season.

Two of these, who came from Bechuanaland, recognized me, and saluted me with the old familiar and musical welcome "Dumêla!" It was a long time since I had heard the expression, but the sound again reverberated in my heart as it used to do in days of old.

Further on I met several waggons. They were evidently loaded with the Lares and Penates of several families, and being dust-stained and soiled, there remained no doubt in my mind that they had travelled a long way. The head man, a young and good-looking Boer, I spoke to, and inquired from whence he had come. It was the old story.

He had trekked from far Kaffirland to save the lives of himself and his family, for, added he, "No white man is safe there, from sunrise to sunset; since the battle of Isanwala. These blacks are all the same, whatever race they belong to, and hate the whites as they do a puff-adder!"

Soon after I became aware that I was being followed by a person on horseback, so slackened my pace to permit him to overtake me. He was a jovial companion, and full of praises of Sir

Bartle Frere, who, only a few days before, had left this locality. Anecdote after anecdote he narrated to me, in reference to the journey of his Excellency, the most amusing of which I will attempt to give the reader.

When it was known at Pourchestroom that the representative of her Majesty was going to visit there, it was resolved to endeavour to give him a dinner that would be unrivalled by any town in the territory. So a Frenchman, who had been steward on board a ship, was engaged as caterer for the occasion. This worthy discovering that no fine table-salt could be procured, supplied its place with Eno's fruit salt. His Excellency declined, but the aide-de-camp took soup. Having added what he thought sufficient salt, he was not a little surprised to observe the contents of his plate in a state of excited fermentation, that almost rivalled a freshly mixed seidlitz powder. "The result of atmospheric influences, doubtless," he murmured. Thus he made no remark, and finished his soup. The next course, the entrées, contained veal cutlets, to some of which Sir Bartle Frere helped himself, and duly powdered its surface with the same material which represented salt. To the astonishment and horror of all the sputtering and fizzing was renewed, while no one could comprehend the why or wherefore, but urged the removal of the objectionable article of food. After many inquiries and much discussion, it was discovered

that the *chef de cuisine*, not knowing the peculiarity of fruit salt, had presumed it would make an excellent substitute for the mineral he had been wont to make use of.

For the truth of this I cannot vouch.

To any reader who is desirous of becoming informed, from an authoritative point, as to the veracity of this occurrence, I can only say "Ask Sir Bartle or Major Hallam-Parr."

At sunset I crossed the pretty river that flows past Klerksdorp, and found myself once more under the hospitable roof of an old acquaintance.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GAME COUNTRY.

IF changes come over the spirit of one's dreams, none the less do they over the realities of life. When last I was at Klerksdorp, it was a hamlet and nothing more; now it has gone into an advanced degree of comparison, and may be styled a village. Houses have sprung up on land which had never known the plough, and smiling gardens, with embryo orchards, cover what a year or two ago was the primæval veldt. I cannot say that the place has improved in my estimation by these innovations, yet it speaks of progress and man's industry, and is evidence of prosperity for the future. I do not oppose advancement, but rather advocate it; yet, at the same time, I cannot help regretting that inroads are made into the original construction of the Great Creator by the transforming influence of human handiwork.

"I love not man the less, but nature more."

Few, I think, will sympathize with me in my ideas; although, if that be the case, there is no reason why I should not express them.

Not many years since I revisited a favourite hunting-ground in America, which I do not designate a hunting-ground because I slaughtered the wild animals that from time immemorial had been its inhabitants, but that I could there study the habits of these children of nature, and feel myself benefited by their innocence and purity. Alas ! when I came again to the scene, a gigantic engine-shop, with chimneys almost reaching to the heavens, occupied its centre, and the noble forest trees, under whose spreading branches I had so frequently reposed, had ceased to exist.

I turned my face westward, and hurried from the spot until I had once more regained a territory beyond the bounds of civilization.

“ *There is society, where none intrude,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.*”

And if the appearance of this distant residence of the white man, on the verge of Tropical Africa, is altered, Death, also, has dealt severely with its inhabitants. The loss of one of them I cannot help feeling deeply, for he was a kind, true-hearted, hospitable sportsman. Having occasionally spare hours on hand, he and I would now and then wander round koppie, kloof, and over veldt, in search of game, and our labours were frequently well rewarded.

The termination of his earthly career was sad indeed ; more so, possibly, since he left a large family behind him. It was in this way.

Being anxious to kill some large game, he went up into the elephant country, on the edge of Matabeleland was struck down by fever after a long day's duck-shooting, and died alone in his waggon, without even an attendant.

Solitary graves, like his, can be discovered nearly anywhere and everywhere—in lands where the most learned and most scientific believe the foot of the white man has never trodden.

Let me change to a less sad subject.

Sir Bartle Frere with his staff passed through Klerksdorp a few days before my arrival, and his popularity is unbounded; even the Boers of the district "swearing by him." He resided for two days at my friend Mr. Leask's house, and was so pleasant, gentle, and unassuming in his manners, that one of the children spoke of him in the warmest terms of affection. His coming at the date he did was a fortunate circumstance for an old acquaintance of mine, Mr. Phillips, "*Elephant*" Phillips, or more familiarly known as the "Playful Elephant,"—a gentleman who has been intimately associated with the interior trade of that part of Africa designated "Distant Kaffirland,"—who was then confined to his waggon by a serious wound in the knee. His Excellency the Governor-General, hearing of his unfortunate position, sent his medical attendant to visit the sick man, who at once performed an operation upon the injured limb; and but for this opportune occurrence, it is supposed my friend would have died in three or four days.

Mrs. Leask's pretty little girl, whom I left an infant, is now a five-year old, and is as blooming and ruddy as any bonnie bairn that trips over the heather-clad hill-sides of Auld Scotland. As I stood and gazed on the wee lassie with fond admiration, her mother mournfully informed me that it was only the other day that they were nearly losing their pet. The child had strayed a few yards up the koppie at the back of the house to gather wild flowers, and while employed in the amusement a night-adder stole towards her, and would, without doubt, have bitten the little innocent but for the interference of timely aid. Death would have assuredly been the result, for this is one of the most venomous of African reptiles. In appearance it is short, thick, and repulsive, the darkness of its skin approaching to black, and it is possessed of great activity. Its favourite haunts are among rocks and stones which possess but scant vegetation. In mode of life it is more nocturnal than diurnal in contrariety to the habits of most reptilia, and does not appear to enjoy the heat of the noontide sun.

In two days my horses were well rested, and had been abundantly supplied with excellent forage, for which I had to pay so exorbitant a price as to make me disgusted that a person travelling on Government service could not resent such treatment. I cannot imagine where the people fancy the money comes from! Sovereigns appear to have no greater value with

them than do shillings with us ; in fact, the indifference exhibited by them to your money when tendered is irritating to the payer to the last degree. Further, your black servants consider it a duty to swindle you out of as much coin as can be extracted by either fair or foul means. My after-rider had been permitted by me to hire a Kaffir to herd my horses, that they might not stray into the adjoining fields. The usual pay for one of these men for a similar service is a shilling a day. On inquiring from my attendant how much I owed, he coolly replied, “ Ten shillings.” “ *Nein ! nein !*” said the wife of the German missionary ; “ *zwei schilling* will do.”

But not a bit of it !

My faithful retainer would not hear of it ! He maintained, in the most insolent manner, that for me to pay such a price was preposterous, and that “ *only* missionaries and Boers would do it.”

Early in the morning, in the society of two friends, I started.

Once more Klerksdorp lay behind me, and my destination—the interior of Africa—was in my front.

They knew of a new route which we proposed taking, and which left the pretty village of Hartebest-Fontein considerably on the westward.

As this course was seldom traversed by transport-riders, we soon began to see game.

On the edge of a large vley, Kaffir cranes, mahems (*Pavonia cristata*), and paddy birds, stood

in immense numbers, while numerous flocks of many a variety of duck frequently passed overhead. Snipe were also very plentiful, and as far as I could judge, from only seeing them on the wing, they were identical with those of the British species.

Africa is pre-eminently a country for hawks, many of them being as handsome and rapacious as those of any other part of the world.

This vley and the vicinity was evidently a favourite haunt of theirs, and, I should think they made it constantly a "hot quarter" for the unfortunate wild-fowl.

My companions' horses were fresh, and they naturally were desirous of making the pace sharp; but as I had so many long and wearisome miles to go, I declined to hurry my animals, and my friends were good enough to moderate their pace to mine. I was much pleased with this courtesy, and in consequence we all witnessed some shooting as good as it was ever my luck to view.

As we passed over the crest of one of the swells upon the veldt, we came upon a large drove of bless-bok, which were not more than three hundred yards off when the first shot was fired; and ere the herd had retreated a third of that distance, three of them were down.

It appeared rather a wanton act of destruction to sacrifice so much valuable food; but such did not turn out to be the case, for scarcely ten minutes after the beasts were killed a hungry

troupe of natives came in sight, wending their way from the far north to the Diamond Fields.

The poor creatures were travel-stained and tired; while the expression of joy which suffused itself over their countenances when we told them they might have all this food, was as ludicrous as it was enjoyable. Some danced, some grinned and laughed, whilst others of the party set to work in a systematic way to denude the graceful antelopes of their skins.

This performance being accomplished, the scene became rather disgusting to a European eye, for many did not hesitate to eat the raw flesh, and that in such quantities as would astonish any person unacquainted with their powers of digestion and capacity.

En avant! once more.

The country we passed over kept ascending, until we got among a collection of as picturesque koppies as I have almost ever seen, and the shrubs and trees were far more abundant than they were in the earlier part of our day's journey.

At two o'clock we again off-saddled.

The better to enable the reader to understand this term, it may not be inappropriate to give a short explanation of the process.

The traveller on horseback in these regions generally has two animals; the one he rides, the other leads.

Every two hours he halts, gives his nags an opportunity to roll—an opportunity they never

fail to take advantage of—then permits them to graze for half-an-hour, more or less, when the saddle is placed upon the back of the horse which was not last ridden, and so on from sunrise to sunset.

If a long journey is being made, forty miles a day is amply sufficient to expect from your beasts, a rather shorter day's work being preferable; yet there are many African horses that may be ridden a hundred and fifty, or even more, miles in three days.

It is but an indifferent horse which cannot, at any time, do twice as much as an ox.

Having remounted, our journey afforded us few objects of interest for the remaining daylight hours. An occasional farmhouse could be seen, with its surrounding orchards of peach, apple, and walnut-trees, the dwarfness of which did not take away from the general dreariness of the neighbourhood.

Nearly all of these homesteads are the property of Boers, each being usually the possessor of about six thousand "morgen," equal to twelve thousand acres of land. They may be said to be essentially pastoral, few cultivating above eight or ten acres. The standard crop is invariably mealies, except where irrigation can be employed. When such is the case a few fields of wheat are grown.

Riding up to one of these establishments, I requested some milk.

A very buxom and equally squalid female

demanded a shilling for the drink ; and although the price was sufficient to frighten even a person who had a long purse, yet after the distance I had come in the heat and dust I deemed myself justified in being, on this occasion, extravagant.

But oh ! my goodness ! when it was produced ! The vessel, in which it was offered, had never been washed since the day it was made ; and, thirsty as I was, I preferred a draught of water out of the first spruit I should come to, and thus left the uncleanly dame deeply pondering over my fastidiousness.

Off-saddled at sunset where pasture was good, and there appeared every indication that we should have a quiet and comfortable night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A QUIET NIGHT.

As a rule, the nights in South Africa are grandly serene. You can gaze up into the vast blue depths of the heavens with similar feelings to those a person experiences when the mind dwells upon the mysteries of eternity. It impresses the whole earth with the belief that there is no end nor termination.

Then the constellations stand out in such brilliant relief, and shine with such particular brightness, that they resemble rose-coloured diamonds, set in the midst of an azure ocean of transparency.

But the Southern Cross, which has acted as my guide on many and many a night, directing my course from the land of enmity and inhospitality, and which I have studied well and often, has never struck me with the admiration expressed for its beauty by almost all the world. In fact, as constellations go, it cannot, in my opinion, bear comparison with our own North Star; yet it must be acknowledged that these African

heavens appear to possess a very great number more stars than those observable North of the Equator.

That night I and my companions sat late over our pipes, and enjoyed narrating to each other many an incident by flood and field; for we all came from the land of cakes, and there is an inherent love in the people that come from the country north of the Tweed for every description of field sports.

The vernacular of one was still as broad as at the time he resided by Dee-side.

I fear that in his boyish days he gave much trouble to landlords and gamekeepers, for he confessed to having slaughtered many a *salmont* and *muir-cock*, which he never bagged for fear the keeper should have *nabbitted* him.

The stillness which prevailed was something marvellous. The horses were out on the veldt feeding, under the care of a forelouper, and thus were out of hearing; so nothing broke the quiet except the occasional cry of an owl, or the more melancholy note of a distant rock-rabbit (*hirax*). No doubt numerous porcupines, ant-bears, and even jumping-hares were around us; but the fire, and our conversation, kept them at a distance. The air was intensely cold, at least I felt it to be so, although provided with a great coat and two blankets; and my boy suffered to such an extent as to groan and grunt nearly half the night. I do not think any of us got a very bountiful supply

of sleep, for we were all up and doing before the day broke.

As nothing in the shape of cooking or coffee-pot can well be carried upon horseback, when we started in the morning we must have looked like three knights of the woeful countenance!

My unfortunate domestic stood shivering when the horses were saddled, and was so incapable of exertion, that I had to perform that duty myself. The rising sun, however, soon brought fresh life into the silent cavalcade, and presently we were jogging along as comfortably as if we had slept on beds of eider-down, and had had a good morning meal.

At half-past seven we arrived at a homestead, the proprietor of which appeared better off than the majority of the Boers I had yet encountered.

Our supply of food, though not what the most fastidious might desire, was abundant, good, and wholesome. Still there were a few objections, one of which I will state.

The heat of the fire in the cooking-place had evidently made the room feel unusually warm. An old lady waited at table with a clout in her hand, which, I believe is designated by these people a "faddock." Well, the woman did her duty with considerable energy, and no little skill. When your plate was empty, and you were about to partake of another dish, she would violently lay hands upon that utensil, and swab it with this cloth. Each of our platters was treated in the

same fashion, and without the assistance of water. The repast was getting towards its termination, when, to my horror, I saw the aged female wiping the perspiration off her face and neck with the identical rag. This was rather appalling to any one who had a poor digestion; but, by Jove, the climax was attained when I saw her grab a dirty urchin of four or five years, who was obviously suffering from a chronic cold, and treat him to something like the same operation.

Flesh and blood can stand a great deal, but I thought this was a little straining the point of delicacy, and I fled from the establishment, gained my horse, and was a mile or two upon the road, before my companions overtook me.

"Baas! I want to speak to you," said my after-rider.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"I can't go much further."

"Then you had better dismount and stop where you are."

"You surely wouldn't leave me on the veldt?"

"That I would. If you cannot ride I cannot stop. I am on the service of Government, and will not be detained by, or for, anybody."

"Well, I'll hang on, sir," he answered; "but it does hurt so. Do, Baas, ride slow!" After which colloquy he dropped in the rear.

Just fancy this fellow, who professed to be able to live on horseback, complaining about feeling ill and sore, before one quarter of the

journey was done! The circumstance certainly made me feel "riled," and, just with a little wee bit more provocation, I think I could have jumped on to him.

If he had been a good and attentive servant I might have felt some pity for him; but he was a cruel, cowardly, lazy beast, who neglected his charges on every opportunity, and was never to be found when wanted.

Moreover, he would lie like a pick-pocket, and, in a most barefaced manner, argue that what you had actually seen him do had never transpired.

Later on in the day we had a grand view of a hunt.

Two young Boers passed us on the road, tolerably well mounted, and behind them was a native, leading a brace of half-bred greyhounds. They were travelling faster than we, so we let them go on ahead.

In half an hour afterwards we overtook them getting ready to have a shot at some spring-bok. Each had his head under the flap of his saddle, hauling with all his might to make the girths sufficiently tight, while the Kaffir was busily engaged in keeping down the dogs—a no easy task to perform, as it appeared to me. At length all was ready.

Then they rode carefully for some distance, up the wind, towards the game, which soon commenced showing alarm, moving off in one long

string. The sportsmen in a moment were out of their saddles and on their feet.

So long was the aim they took that it appeared as though they never would fire.

However, two reports occurred almost simultaneously, and one of the antelopes came down on his chest, the remainder of the herd leaving their stricken companion.

With an amount of activity of which I had not previously expected them capable of, each Boer regained his saddle; the hounds by this time were slipped, and the chase became most exciting. The quarry had only a leg broken.

Many would say that would be sufficient. Learn, then, gentle reader, that a spring-bok or bless-bok with a broken fore-leg will give a well-mounted man and a pair of ordinary dogs as much difficulty in capturing him as can well be imagined.

The men and their curs did their best. More reckless riding could not be witnessed. First one and then another was foremost, for the veldt abounded in sun-cracks and ant-bear holes. At one period of the hunt the contestants galloped neck and neck for two hundred yards, when the horse one was riding—a piebald—turned a complete somersault, as perfect as you ever could have seen at Croydon or the Grand Liverpool Steeplechases.

But both horse and rider were, as the Yankees express it, "real grit," the pair of them regaining a footing in an instant afterwards, and the chase

being renewed by the unfortunate equestrian with undiminished vigour.

The bok crossed and recrossed the road in front of us. It was evidently giving out, and thus began to run cunning.

We stood up in our stirrups, and taking off our hats, vociferously shouted "Go it!" and they obeyed our instructions to the letter. But soon after the other came to grief over a dry crack; and so severe was his spill that possibly a minute or more was lost before he was reseated. Afterwards, however, he was out of the race, and I fear both man and horse were badly hurt.

Fortunately their services were not required; for a few moments later one of the curs seized the bok by the hind foot and held to his grip manfully, the unfortunate game wheeling and wheeling again in the endeavour to use its horns; but these efforts soon failed, the second hound having taken hold of its flank.

It was painful to hear its plaintive cries when it viewed the hunter's approach; but the torture it suffered was of brief duration. Another shot from the rifle decided the matter, and the poor antelope lay dead upon the veldt.

CHAPTER XIX.

TRECK BOERS.

IN the afternoon we off-saddled in rather a pretty valley, girded on both sides by rocks of considerable magnitude, whilst the low-lying ground, which margined a stream of diminutive size, was covered with a mimosa here named "Kameel-Dorn." The "Watchtabit" briar was also extremely plentiful—a terror to equestrian or traveller on foot.

I can vouch that no more objectionable shrub than this grows; and many a time have I and my horse been tied up so tightly in it that to advance or retire without the use of a knife was an impossibility.

Before saddling, the creaking of ungreased wheels denoted the advance of strangers towards us; and glancing to the north, I observed three sorry-looking waggons, with their tilts totally denuded of canvas.

Wearily and slowly the patient bullocks toiled on through the heavy sand; and the gun-like reports of their drivers' whips indicated with what alacrity they were proceeding on their southern

journey. As we were at the outspanning place, the waggons debouched from their course and halted beside us.

Soon the tired bullocks were unhitched from their yokes, and slaking their thirst, or seeking to distend their collapsed sides.

The men of the party, three in number, came and shook hands with us; and one of my companions offered them a "*supje*" of "*square-face*," which each immediately accepted, and, I fear, with hungry eyes followed the bottle as it was replaced in its owner's holster.

There is a deal of virtue in a glass of grog!

Its abuse, and not its use, is to be condemned.

The strangers found the benefit of it, and changed from miserable mortals to thoroughly jovial and satisfied ones, for they lost their dejected appearance, and soon became most talkative.

Their tale was truly one of sorrow.

Three years previous to this date they had sold their farms in the Transvaal, and had gone into far Kaffirland.

With them was all their worldly wealth—possibly two or three hundred head of cattle.

Here they had enclosed, after much labour, a sufficiency of soil for tillage, built houses and cattle kraals, planted and sowed.

But after the Insanwala disaster was known, their black neighbours became "cheeky," impounded and stole their cattle, and ultimately

ordered them to quit. Such an order was not to be laughed at, and there remained only one course open to them, viz., “go.”

To the northward Africa was closed to them; to the southward their farms were in the hands of strangers, and their paternal government had ceased to exist. Of the two alternatives the latter only could be chosen.

More squalid women and children than the creatures belonging to this party I never set eyes upon in my life.

Africa can tell many tales of this sort.

A gentleman who had lately returned from the lake district informed me that he came across, in the neighbourhood of the lake river, seventeen waggons at a stand-still in the most fever-stricken district, for want of oxen; and that only two men, with four or five women, out of a party of seventy, had survived.

For horrors such as these the Imperial Government is not answerable. The unsettled inhabitants of northern Transvaal, from religious fanaticism, or from being the dupes of designing knaves, would insist upon going, in spite of all remonstrance.

In their language they say, “That they are the chosen people of God, and the Promised Land lies before them.”

A few years ago, I found a party with seventy waggons encamped on the Limpopo, all intent on making search for this scriptural, imaginary

country. It was absurd to argue with them against their intention. The result was that nine out of ten of the people died from fever or want of water. The mineral and agricultural wealth of the district through which we have been passing I cannot say much for. It has one grand drawback—"want of water."

Where springs do occur, you will find farms, but the stranger or emigrant of course cannot dispossess the present owner.

The country also suffers much from want of rain, which prevents the building, or indeed utility, of large reservoirs or dams; so I feel no hesitation in offering an opinion that its population will ever be one of a very sparse description.

It is a question that has often been asked me, whether the Abyssinian water-drawing pump would answer; not having seen it used, I am unable to give an answer.

It is strange, although moisture apparently is so scarce here, that the appearance of the veldt has undergone an extraordinary change, an alteration most pleasing to the eye, for the monotonous grass—nothing but grass—which covers such large districts of land to the southward, has given place to shrubs and even trees.

Bidding the trek Boers good-bye, we rode through much more variegated scenery.

A low-lying meadow covered with dry reeds struck my attention, so I remarked casually to

my companion, "What a liony-looking place that is!"

"Your'e right, captain," he answered; "it is not so many years ago that you or I would not have cared about riding past here of a dark, stormy night. Pete Jacobs and some others had a hot time with an old mannikin there; he nearly settled some of them. But I don't believe there is a lion within a hundred miles of the place now, unless what they say in Zeerust is true, that there is still one of the regular veritable old sort yet hanging about the hills over the town."

"But tell me the story about Pete Jacobs. I know him, if he is the man who used to live at Tate, where he helped to bury dear old Grandy."

"The same. I am not good at a yarn, but here goes, as near as I remember. Down in the bottom there lived a big family of lions, and night after night they did some damage. One day it was a horse, next an ox, and often a young nigger off the back tray of the waggon. You are well aware that is the most dangerous place you can sit?"

"Yes, I thought so."

"Well; these beasts had bothered the Boers so much, that they determined to clear them out. However, I don't think they liked the job, so kept putting it off from day to day. At last the old one he killed a man on the road to Jacobsdal, and the same night the whole family of them visited Pete's kraal killed an ox, and ate it close by the house."

“These last acts made it a question whether the Boers or lions had to quit.

“The latter was resolved upon; so the neighbours assembled with their guns and dogs. Who was to lead the way? who was to go first into the reeds? became the question. But there were no volunteers; not a man of them liked the job, and little blame to them. I’m hanged if I would have gone in; would you, captain?”

“Not after my experiences; I might have done so once, but never no more,” I replied.

My friend continued. “After that they tried to set the reeds on fire; but when attempting this, one of the brutes rushed out, and regardless of dogs and shots, knocked over a young man, picked him up in his mouth, and carried him off into the cover. There was a terrible scene then among the hunters, for the father and two brothers were among the party. They vowed that they would enter the cover in search of the lost one, while their friends swore that they should not.

“In fact, if report speaks true, they were nearly turning to and shooting each other. However, any one must acknowledge that it was a most awkward situation.

“At length one, with a better head upon him than the others, pointed out that there was a steep gradient all down the reeds, with a high hill at the upper end. .

"They all knew that. What did that matter? Had they not lived there for years?

"But the speaker was not to be brow-beaten. Swartz was his name, I think. So he insisted on being listened to, and his argument was as follows :—

" 'That if a bullock-waggon were taken to high ground, and the cattle unyoked, its own gravity would bring it through the centre of the reeds. In the waggon there might be several men provided with their guns, and plenty of firebrands duly lighted to drop in the cover in their course.' "

"An excellent plan!" I could not help exclaiming, for the ground was admirably suited for successfully attempting such a novel device.

"Yes, that's so; and I believe they did it too; and had the satisfaction of driving the lions out into the veldt, where, with the help of their horses, the Boers soon polished them off."

There has been much sickness among cattle here this season. Consequently the vultures and large white-breasted ravens were in immense numbers, and so tame and over-fed that they only hopped a few paces to avoid being trodden on. This must account for so few being seen in Zululand early in the war.

Towards sunset we met a party of Boers, who had evidently been drinking hard. All were mounted, and were making a terrible row, very inappropriate indeed to the solitude and harmony of the scene.

When we reached them, one of my acquaintances asked what was up?

The answer he received was, "We are to have back the Transvaal; Sir Bartle Frere has said it."

"No!" exclaimed my friend.

"He said," the Boer replied, "that he would recommend it to the earnest consideration of the Queen, and she is sure to do what he advises. Bully for Sir Bartle, groans for old Shepstone!" So spoke one of the noisy ones.

"Don't you believe it; it is only a polite form of speech in English," I informed my companion *sotto voce*.

This much reassured my comrade, as he had invested money in the country, and goes in for improvements and education.

CHAPTER XX.

A BOER PARTY.

AFTER we had off-saddled for the evening, and resigned ourselves to the disagreeable necessity of sleeping on the veldt, a visitor arrived. He was a big, good-tempered fellow, with any amount of gossip at his command, and possessed of some fund of humour. The stranger was well mounted, fairly dressed, and last, though not least, clean. Our food and liquids he freely partook of, after which he thanked us all round, and called each in succession a jolly good fellow. At length he mounted, and rode off. About five minutes he might have been gone, when he returned. Now he was just a little nervous in his manner. Why?—the reason?

He was on his way to a party of young people at a farmhouse only a mile off. There would be lots of nice girls there. Would we come?

Before receiving an answer, and possibly fearing a refusal, he added in the most tender tones that among them he expected to meet his *fiancée*.

After that none denied that they had a hanker-

ing for such entertainments; but we ultimately accepted the invitation too rapidly, for our late guest quickly added,—

“None of you must talk to her too much, for she has promised me that she will be mine; and I am afraid you may make her break her word, for you see Boer girls are partial to your countrymen. In Jacobsdal and Zeerust you find all of them have got wives after they come here; and they get the best. There is George W—— and George C——, and a heap of others all married to Boer women with lots of money and *mooi* girls too.”

We all agreed that such conduct would be ungenerous, dishonourable, and wrong, after his kindness and desire to show us pleasure.

A tramp of about a mile brought us to one of the ordinary farmhouses of the locality. The windows and doors of it glowed with light, while the melodious strains of an accordion, sadly out of tune, added harmony to the scene.

Pleasure and merriment seemed to reign paramount within, judging from the frequent peals of laughter that broke at rapid intervals on the stillness of the night.

As I dressed as much like a Boer or transport-rider as possible—the better to traverse this and the preceding portion of the country without attracting particular notice—I had been in the apartment, for there was only one, almost an hour, and had been introduced to nearly every

person present, before my nationality became discovered.

I do not think the females liked me one whit the less when they learned I was an Englander ; but the masculines glowered at me most ferociously.

If I had been travelling as formerly—on my own account—I should certainly not have minded this—nay, rather enjoyed it ; but circumstances alter cases, so I stole away at an early hour.

Two youths, anxious to distinguish themselves, and earn the reputation of heroes, followed me. When half my journey was accomplished they ranged alongside, and began to indicate that they were not animated towards me with feelings of brotherly love.

I bore a good deal, but there is a margin we all know ; so when one came aggressively close, and attempted to bar my path, and exhibited an intention that they were about to commence actual hostilities, I shook my loaded crop over my head, and declaimed in my best oratorical powers, and with all the strength of voice nature had given me,—

"On, Stanley, on ! Charge, Chester, charge !" and the foe skedaddled, or in other words "quit" the locality.

Being only an infantry force, or, to express it plainer, having no cavalry to follow up the pursuit, I desisted from taking further steps against the enemy. Truly it was a bloodless victory, but it exhibited immense generalship.

As I wrapped, not my colours, but a couple of

very travel-stained war-department blankets round me, and lay down to rest beside my ponies, I could not help moralizing on the possibility of Æsop's fable in reference to the jackass in the lion's skin being true.

Early in the morning, before the break of day, I was up and doing. So was my boy; he really is "*bad*," I believe, and unfit to go much farther.

I am confidently informed that I shall not be able to get another after-rider to go with me into far Kaffirland, as the country is at present so disturbed, even to such an extent that nearly all the interior traders have been obliged to leave; the majority of whom are at the present moment assembled in Zeerust. "We shall see what we shall see;" and if I cannot get an attendant, then I will sell two of the horses, and with the other two go in alone.

I know the position of the sun at all hours of the day, and of the stars at night, so well as to prevent my straying much, even if I have to travel unknown paths, or make a road for myself over the veldt. I have done so in America and Australia; why should I not do so again? and if the birds of the air and beasts of the field do not show me water, then I shall have to give up looking for it.

This is the season of the year at which the majority of the birds of this portion of Africa have migrated to the north. The loss of these animated jewels is sadly to be deplored; for even

in their wild state they are most fascinating companions to the weary of body and depressed of spirit. Yet there are two left—a brilliant green woodpecker, of a very timid disposition, and almost as large as a pigeon; the other a perky, confiding, and exceedingly plump lark, which will flush almost at your feet, and fly fifty or more yards in front before settling. For sometimes an hour this charming little songster will continue this performance. In colour this favourite is nearly black; in size very much the same as our meadow-lark, but the tail is more abbreviated than in the home species.

Many African travellers say that the birds of this country have no melody in their song. This is quite an error. It is as Dr. Livingstone says—"Europeans think so; for their ear takes some time to get attuned to their notes."

I will not deny the beauty of the plaintive call of the robin, as he sits upon a high twig of some hedge half embedded in snow, and that it is dear to me, very dear indeed; so is the lark's carol, as he soars aloft from the verdant pasture to our spring skies of cerulean blue, flecked with many a fleecy cloud of whitest snow. And why this deep, intense, all-absorbing admiration? Simply because they recall our memories to the days of childhood, to that period of life when the future is one unbounded realm of hope, the past a dream of joy.

Take an American, for instance, and what will

induce him to believe that aught animated in nature rivals in ecstatic touching music the sweet warblings of the blue-bird, oriel, or even mocking-bird ?

If a true child of Africa were brought to England—one, remember, reader, who had not been prejudiced by the opinions of European parents—he would prefer the voices of the lovely feathered beauties of the Karoo, the veldt, or the wooded banks of the Limpopo, to all others.

My favourite horse Tommy, when brought up to be saddled this morning, I discovered to have a white film over his left eye. A large bruise above the eyelid at once explains the cause. Some cowardly scoundrel has struck him there with a stick or stone. This circumstance has caused me much pain ; more, perhaps, when I think that the cruel deed has been done by a human being.

But my cup of sorrow is not yet full. Observing that the Basuto pony could not, or would not, feed, I examined his mouth, and to my indignation discovered that at least two inches had been cut off his tongue.

Who is the malefactor ? is the question now ; if it is possible to discover, I will spare neither trouble nor means to do so ; and should I be successful, I will make him remember till the day of his death the punishment he received at my hands for his inhuman conduct.

Tommy's bright, intelligent, loving eyes were treasures that I loved to gaze into. He was made

to be loved, caressed, and sympathized with; for a better, more willing or enduring, horse never looked through halter. The other animal was not so great a favourite; yet that did not mitigate the heinousness of the act of mutilation from which he suffers. That I am indignant, angry—yes, and revengeful—against the culprit I will not deny; for I am but mortal. He who would treat a dumb animal—and those animals faithful, confiding servants—with brutality, I would crush under my feet as I would an adder.

Another cause I have for hostility against the wretch: the horses are the property of the Imperial Government; without them I cannot perform my allotted duty, and here their place cannot be supplied. Too bad! too bad!

The tree-covered hills that lay to the south and west of Jacobsdal had just come in sight when an excellent boy, the servant of one of my companions, and to whom I had shown some little kindness, came up to me.

“Bass,” said he, “I know who hurt your horses. If you don’t believe, you ask Tom and Dick; we all see it done.”

“Well, Jansey, speak out like a man.”

“That I will, Bass; for I not like to see good horse abused. It was your after-rider. He say suppose Tommy go wrong, you will not be able to go beyond Zeerust, and then you take him back to Natal.”

“And the pony?” exclaimed I excitedly.

“ Well, my master, he hitched it with a green reim round the lower jaw to the backboard of that trader’s waggon that was along with us yesterday, because he said he was d——d if he was going to ride ; so when the waggon treck, the small horse pull back, pull back, and so cut his tongue off.”

I rushed to punish the ungrateful scoundrel ; but he looked so ill that I desisted.

He was really worn out ; seven hundred miles constant riding was more than his physique could bear ; thus dare any man hurry his fate or career by a blow ; for the approach of death appeared to me already on his lips, and there was no saying when he should have to answer for his offence to a higher and far, far greater Master than myself.

CHAPTER XXI.

JACOBSDAL AND ZEERUST.

AFTER anything but a disagreeable ride, the summit of a tree-clothed ridge is reached, and, turning sharp east, at our feet lies the beautiful valley in which repose the two pretty villages of Jacobsdal and Zeerust.

This is, undoubtedly, one of the most lovely spots in South Africa. Water abounds in it throughout the year, and consequently vegetation is always green and charming.

It is surrounded by hills of considerable altitude on the south, east, and north; while to the westward its limits appear, to the human eye, to be interminable. Nearly all sub-tropical fruits grow here in abundance, and wheat, mealies, and Indian corn are cultivated with success.

It is the Ultima Thule of civilization; yet both these villages are more populous and prosperous than many further from the frontier.

As we gradually wind our way down a somewhat tortuous road, and farm-houses, that have lain unseen, meet our gaze, springing up, as it

were, from a bosom of sheltering trees, I can well imagine, when the earliest settlers arrived, that they exclaimed, "Here we rest!" as it is reported the first white men ejaculated on entering Alabama.

At length a handsome homestead is reached, and if its appearance does not denote wealth, it certainly does abundance. Large sleek herds of fat oxen repose amid the long grass in front of the door, sheep and goats lie in the sun under the walls of the adjoining cattle kraals, and pigs, fowls, &c., not even forgetting duck and geese, form a picture which cannot fail to remind the observer strongly of a prosperous English farm-yard.

Half a mile further, and the village is entered. Houses stand on either side, amongst which looms up, overtopping all, a large, square building, the meeting-house of the Calvinist population.

This structure is imposing alone in size, for it consists of four undecorated walls, which support a flat and unprepossessing roof, the edifice reminding me of one of those hideous "Bethels," Methodist chapels, which are scattered profusely over the county of Cornwall.

How often do I ask myself "Why do certain religious sects do all in their power to render their houses of worship repulsive and ungainly?" Surely if the worship of the Creator is so necessary, as we all know it to be, and that He is such a kind, good, and forgiving Father, we should do all we can to make the house devoted to His

service as attractive as possible! A good result might also be obtained by following this course; for many who are lukewarm, or even who have strayed from their faith, would be drawn back to the path that leads to future happiness. . . . Half way down the street an old friend rushes out to welcome me; and nothing but dismounting from my saddle, and accepting hospitality for man and beast, would satisfy him.

The world has prospered with my host. His dwelling-house is roomy and comfortable, and his store well stocked with all the requirements of this market.

The number of Boers and waggons surrounding the latter indicate plainly that my friend is doing a thriving trade.

The female population muster strong, for they are wonderfully fond of a visit to the *Necotie Winkle*. But the salesman must watch them well, since these ladies have light fingers. He must, however, use a little diplomacy, for to detect them in a theft would be only to lose their custom. All, therefore, he has to do is to chalk it down to them, in their accounts, at the same time charging double in case of error.

These feminines, who really have little or no complexions, take great care of the little they do possess; therefore they eschew soap and water, and encase their faces in a greased cloth resembling the *yasmak* of Oriental nations.

Their clothing, as it is cut and put together,

would astonish M. Worth. Dowdiness is no name for it. A bolster with a slack cord round the middle conveys but a faint idea of the beauties of their proportions. Then the bonnets—the poke-hats of charity-school girls are elegant in comparison !

It is extraordinary, with all this, the extravagant desire for ornament, when they can obtain it, which leads them to stick their dresses all over with patches of ribbon of every shade, colour, and dimension ; whilst bad jewellery, of the basest and most trumpery description, hangs from, or encircles, every available part of the person.

While on the subject of the ladies, it will not be out of place to describe how matters of courtship are conducted among this people.

A ride of forty or fifty miles is considered as no journey among them, from the fact that farms are large, and dwellings therefore far apart, and that they are partial to visiting one another. When a young man and a young lady become, eligible it is known far and wide, and a go-between is employed to find out the respective wealth of each. Should these preliminary inquiries prove satisfactory, the gentleman mounts his *courting-horse*, an animal he has purchased for the purpose, and which, when severely bitted and well spurred, is prancing and jumping all over the place ; because it is considered by this son of Africa a great recommendation in his favour to be deemed a plucky and fearless rider.

So have I seen many an aristocratic Frenchman in the Bois de Boulogne seeking to make way with "the fair," with possibly a like anticipation, and like eventual success.

At length he arrives at the domicile of his intended, dismounts at the door, after having curvetted three or four times, when, if his visit is acceptable, he is invited to enter.

When within the house he shakes hands with every member of the family, then seats himself in a corner, from whence, probably, for the remainder of the day, he says nothing. The old Frauw may address a few words now and then to him, the younger members never.

At the evening meal he looks pious, and listens reverently to the long grace which precedes it. Afterwards, when the repast is finished, he seizes the first opportunity to approach the vicinity of the object of his attentions.

This is done by the execution of a number of strategic manœuvres. He tacks from one side of the room to the other, looks in every direction excepting the one in which he desires to go, finds objects of attraction on the different walls, or upon the floor; thus, in course of time, he gets sufficiently close to whisper, "We'll set oop this necht," into her ear, in passing by. The words out of his mouth, he flies off like an arrow, as if struck by conscience at the iniquity of the deed he has done.

Bedtime comes. The father, mother, and all

retire, the visitor remaining in his seat. Ten minutes, possibly a quarter of an hour, passes. Silence reigns supreme over the house.

A sudden fluttering is heard. A door opens, or a curtain is drawn, and in walks mademoiselle, with a match-box in one hand, and a piece of candle in the other.

If the swain be pleasing in her sight, the candle will be tolerably long; if the reverse, it will be short in proportion.

The reason for this is, that when the candle has burnt to the end the interview *must* terminate. I have known an artful young fellow to take an extra piece of candle in his pocket. "*Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.*" The candle lighted is set upon the table. The two lovers, seated together, whisper in each other's ears the soft nonsenses they have to say.

Time flies rapidly, the light comes to an end, and the meeting is abruptly broken up. The damsel hurriedly seeks her couch, and the unfortunate man (like Tam O'Shanter) *maun ride!!* Many might think this an exaggeration, but it is nothing of the kind. . . .

My horses, having been well cared for, I re-saddle, and start for Zeerust, the last village I shall see before leaving the Transvaal soil, and entering far Kaffirland.

This ride is a very charming one. You cross one or two streams, pass several substantial houses, bedded in orange-trees, and not unfre-

quently meet persons travelling between the two villages. The distance is about nine miles, and the road nearly straight, so an hour and a half brings me within sight of my destination.

The hills that lie to the northward of Zeerust simply look gorgeous with the rays of the setting sun thrown upon them; while the town, with its numerous white buildings, makes a pleasant foreground to the picture. Four years has changed it much, for it has doubled its size in that period, showing that British protection and enterprise is, even in this distant region, producing beneficial results.

The preponderating number of citizens here are British subjects by birth, but the whole population does not exceed 200 souls.

The thoroughfares are unusually busy. What I was told about the traders having retired from the interior, and come to Zeerust for a sanctuary, I discovered to be true.

As I ride up the street I recognize face after face of men I have known north of the Limpopo. With each I have a hearty shake of the hand, to indicate that we bear each other no ill-will, and I adjourn to a large house, with a signboard warning the traveller that it is an hotel.

I am fortunate enough to find room for myself, and accommodation for my now tired horses. However, my boy requires attention. I am aware that none of the white inhabitants will receive him, and that the black people will show no hos-

pitality to the stranger. Thus I pay a visit to the *Landdrost*, or magistrate, to learn from him, if I can, what I had better do under the circumstances, and whether he can supply me with an attendant to take his place.

In reference to the first he can give me no advice, for such a case has never been brought under his notice before, and there is no hospital or charitable institution existing in the community. To my second request he holds out scant hopes of being able to afford me assistance, as the whole native population is in a most unsettled state.

“If it had not been for that unfortunate Isanwala affair,” he exclaimed, “you might have had a dozen; but, believe me, sir, now we ourselves can scarcely obtain a house-servant.”

My prospect at this period is, indeed, brilliant—without after-rider, two maimed and wounded horses on my hands, and hundreds of miles of inhospitable country to be traversed, before I shall have performed the duty which has been entrusted to me.

CHAPTER XXII.

OLD MEMORIES.

To the west of the village of Zeerust there lies an extensive meadow, covered by luxuriant grass and well supplied with water. Almost in its centre stands a solitary tree, which has a history, for it is the public outspanning place.

Here every hunter going into the far interior, or returning, has his waggon unyoked. The trader also selects it as his halting-place. On two occasions I have done likewise.

The first instance was scarcely interesting, for, although destined for the elephant country, I had no companion whites with me, only a number of native attendants ; but the last time I outspanned there I was joined by one of the dearest friends of my youth, who had followed me from the coast, and intended pursuing me however far I might have penetrated into the bowels of the country. Alas ! when we met he was intent upon entering into the heart of Africa. I, sick and dispirited, was returning from it broken down. I could not go back with him, so he resolved to go into the

land alone. Sick, however, as I was, experience told me that there were such defects connected with his outfit, that failure was certain, and death not improbable.

For instance, his cattle had made a very rapid "trek" from Durban at a season of the year when little grass was to be found, consequently they were hollow and gaunt, footsore and weary.

My oxen were in a far better plight; I gave him mine, and took his; and under this tree I started for England and home—he for the pathless wastes that lay between the Limpopoo and the Equator.

Never did the sun shine upon a more powerfully built or more hale man, never did the hand grasp that of a more sincere or congenial companion. But before another year had succeeded that parting, his body was decaying in an unkept and almost unknown, grave.

I could not but deem it one of my first duties to visit this tree. It appeared to me almost as though I were visiting the grave of one I had loved.

His name was Lieutenant Grandy, R.N., and if the bark of that tree had not already been carved with the names of a hundred less worthy men, I should like to have engraved a record upon it that would have reminded the world of the existence of such a true and generous gentleman.

It was in making this visit that I discovered the richness of the surrounding pasture, and in

consequence I hired a herd and gave orders that my horses, after their morning feed of oats, should graze there until it was time to repeat the grain feed and bed them up for the night; for it was evident to me that, do what I could, I should not be able to leave Zeerust for three or four days. This course, in the event, I found to be most beneficial to my ponies; the soft ground not only cooling and resting their heated feet, but also the nutritious pasturage acting most satisfactorily upon their health.

My next step was to submit my old attendant to a doctor, who immediately informed me that his life was in serious danger, and that to insist upon his going further up country would infallibly impose upon me the necessity of burying him upon the veldt; so I went again to the landdrost, and made pecuniary arrangements for care to be taken for my servant's comfort until I should return, or he might become convalescent.

This business being disposed of, I endeavoured to impress upon him the necessity of his using every effort to get me a new after-rider; but although the landdrost was willing, nay, even zealous in the cause of Government, I was requiring a service which proved an impossibility for him to accomplish.

He provided me, however, with a rough map, containing the names of all the chiefs, kraals, and tribes, which it would be desirable for me to visit.

This I afterwards had corrected by several of the traders, whose experience was indubitable, who all showed the utmost assiduity in assisting one who was in the Government service ; but without exception each individual assured me that I was undertaking a task which I should never succeed in, and from which it was improbable I should ever return.

One man, whom I had known in years gone by as the most daring of hunters, and perfectly well acquainted with the language and habits of each of the outlying nations, promised to be my companion, on the condition that I paid him a remuneration commensurate with the risk he had to run.

Not wishing to be over-lavish with the public funds entrusted to me, for some time I hesitated, but at last concluded that it was false policy to be penny-wise and pound-foolish.

So the bargain was struck, and I felt confident that the greatest obstacle I had to encounter was now overcome by this arrangement.

Dieu dispose—although *l'homme propose*. By next morning the trader had changed his mind, whether from the advice of his friends, or fear of danger on his own part, I cannot say, and refused point-blank to keep to his undertaking.

When I received his note, I could almost have cried ! I certainly cursed my fate, for I was only too well aware that the parsimony of Government officials would never give me credit for, or believe in, the obstacles which beset my path.

It had now become apparent to me that it would be necessary to remain here a day or two longer. The delay was as irksome as it was needful, and I could only console myself with the knowledge that the rest would make my horses and their rider the more fit for the tremendous work which lay before them.

Kind friends, who were anxious to assist me, gave me information of various persons in different directions, who, if they were obtainable, would well answer my purpose.

In those two days I almost rode myself to death. How many miles I rode in the time, goodness only knows, and how the hired horses suffered the owners alone could tell, in my search for an honest and suitable attendant. But every one refused ; in fact I honestly believe that had I offered them my total emoluments and pay, I could not have induced a single man to accompany me. I was well aware that, had I returned to Natal under such circumstances, not one there was sufficiently conversant with the unsettled state of this distant country to believe that I had exerted myself to the extent I had, to remedy my forlorn plight.

This made me doubly resolved to succeed, and in this instance the old adage was verified—“ The darkest hour was just before the dawn.”

By chance I met in the street Mr. Jansen, Lutheran missionary and post-master at the Kaffir station of Moiloes, eighteen miles west from

Zeerust. He was an old acquaintance, and one from whom I had previously accepted hospitality.

To him I told the nature of my duties, my disappointments, hopes, and fears.

Even he could hold out to me no prospect of success, yet promised me all the aid it lay in his power to afford, and further invited me to come to this station; "for," added he, "it is eighteen miles nearer your scene of operations than this place, so you will lose no time by so doing."

That evening, about sunset, he intended to start, and kindly offered me a seat in his trap; also advising me to leave my horses behind, with orders that they should be driven over the following morning.

As I had a couple of hours to spare, I returned to the hotel to collect my arms, blankets, and horse-gear, where I met a lady that I had known in former years. I inquired after her little son, whose attractive ways, and more attractive appearance, had caused me to strike up an acquaintance with him.

To my grief I learnt that he had gone to his last home; the circumstances of his death being painful, but by no means uncommon in Africa.

He and his companions had been playing at ball in a large store-room. After this amusement had been carried on for some time, their plaything fell behind a large box.

With the impetuosity of youth, and in the excitement of pleasure, he pushed his hands down

the aperture to regain it, when he was bitten by a cobra in the wrist, and was dead within the hour.

While touching upon the venomous nature of the bites of some snakes, I will relate a story which combines both the solemn and ludicrous.

My informant was a Mr. Palmer, who lives about fifty miles west of Utenhague, in the eastern province of the old colony.

One of the hens, a favourite fowl, was missing, and was generally supposed to have been laying away from the premises, or, possibly sitting upon eggs. Although frequent search was made, nothing could be discovered as to her whereabouts. By a mere chance, two of the Kaffir lads in his employment, boys of fourteen or fifteen years of age, entered one of the old outhouses adjoining the farm to procure some potatoes for the use of the family ; and while engaged in selecting what they considered the most suitable specimens for cooking, heard a rustling in the thatch, where it overlapped the outside of the wall.

“ ‘Od rot it, Jem ! ” said one ; “ why that’s the old hen ! ”

“ Darn me if it ain’t ! ” replied the other.

“ Go and get a stool,” added the first speaker, “ and we will soon roust her out of that ! ”

So a chair or stool was brought that they might reach the desired elevation, which being mounted, one of the boys forced his arm into the crevice, no doubt giggling at having made the discovery of the hiding-place of this recusant hen.

But in a moment after he withdrew his hand exclaiming, "Hang the old thing! how she pecks!" His companion now accused him of cowardice, and chaffed him with being afraid of a fowl.

"Then you had better go up and try it!" said the other. And the challenge was immediately accepted.

"By Gom! she do peck bad," said the latter, at once withdrawing his hand.

In a few hours both lads were dead! The noise they heard, which had so much resembled the hen, having been made by a snake of one of the most venomous species.

But sunset has arrived. Into the trap I get with my friend Mr. Jansen.

He has a good pair of horses before him, and drives both fast and well.

An hour afterwards we are at a farm close by the road-side, where we halt and indulge in the luxury of a sumptuous tea. The host and hostess are both young, and the latter is pretty and very agreeable, the two doing the utmost to make us enjoy our visit.

After smoking a weed, we are again in the carriage—a double-seated buggy—and are spinning rapidly upon our way, over roads of a most villainous description.

But Mr. Jansen knows them well, and so do his horses. Thus, by half-past nine at night, we pull

up in front of the mission station, and are received with kind greetings and offers of hospitality from that gentleman's good wife.

Both of my hosts are Danish, and I am sure that kinder hearted or better people it would be difficult to find in the whole of the world.



Linköping Mission Station.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MISSIONARY STATION.

LINEKANI (a musical name, is it not, gentle reader?) is where I am now. Well does it deserve the appellation, for not only is my kind host's residence charming, but the view of the surrounding meadows and of the encircling hills is as attractive a picture as the eye of the greatest landscape connoisseur would wish to rest upon.

Let me try and describe the house. It is built after the pattern of the bungalows of India, therefore only one storey high, with a wide verandah running the entire length of the building. On either side of the hall door are four windows; therefore, as may be imagined, its dimensions are not limited. The walls are white as snow, and the roof is composed of the good old-fashioned and comfortable thatch that ever looks so pleasing to an English eye.

The back of Mr. Jansen's residence is fairly imbedded in loquat, orange, lemon, peach, nectarine, and mulberry-trees; while in front stand upwards of two dozen grand blue-gum-trees in

the form of an avenue, each of which is fully one hundred feet high.

As wings—each of the same dimensions and running at right angles from the dwelling-house—there are two buildings, the one used as store-house, the other as carpenter’s shop and coach-house ; while a stream of pure water, about eight feet wide, forms the outer boundary of the enclosure.

If ever peace and happiness dwelt anywhere, it does most assuredly here. The repose is perfect, and the solitude not oppressive, from the brightness of the surroundings.

Turtle-doves, finches, cuckoos, and many more species of birds, swarm in the trees and bushes, and from morning to night charm the ear with their notes of praise and love.

The Kaffir kraals, which form a village or town of rather less than fifteen thousand inhabitants, are over a mile distant, the school and church being removed from here about half that space.

The fields adjoining—for Mr. Jansen farms about twenty-five acres—are surrounded by fine quince hedges, which here remain green all the year round.

Long before an early breakfast I was out to enjoy the balmy morning air. There was plenty of life and amusement to be witnessed by those who love rural scenes—cows being milked, oxen yoked, and horses, donkeys, and fat cattle driven off to pasture. As to poultry, they were

there in hundreds, and of every domestic variety and species.

Even pets were not deficient. At one side of the hall door was fastened a large tame baboon, that rejoiced in the name of Katrina; on the other side a dear little grey monkey, happy in the cognomen of Thomaso.

Dogs and cats were not wanting. Possibly I have forgotten or overlooked some other domestic favourites; if so, I must apologize for the omission.

After breakfast we entered into business, the result of which was that my host sent his principal servant to inform the two chiefs that I was residing at his house, and desired to see them to discuss important affairs connected with the Imperial Government.

One of these captains, or chiefs, he informed me, I should doubtless see on the morrow; the other in the course of a few days.

"But this delay I cannot endure; I must be off and at work," I exclaimed.

"If you hurry these people, they will do nothing for you; they have no idea of the value of time," he courteously rejoined.

"Explain for my information, please," I asked, "the meaning of there being two captains, or chiefs, or kings. I thought all these tribes were monarchical."

"So they are; but here is an exception—one is the proper king, the other a pretender. The

story is not long, and you should know it. A former chief died, and his son (the heir) was an infant. In consequence, a regent was appointed during his minority. The young king had scarcely come of age when he also died, leaving behind him a boy. This infant, of course, was rightful heir to the chieftainship, but his age precluded him from reigning. Thus the same regent, by name Moyloe, continued to manage the affairs of the people. He also had a son, the same age as the young king; the boys were brought up together until they were eighteen years old, when Moyloe died. Then the proper heir asserted his rights, the other denied them; one half the people adhered to the former, the remainder to the latter. They then submitted the case to the Transvaal Government, who procrastinated giving a decision.

“ When our flag was unfurled over the Transvaal the case was brought before our then Administrator; he also deferred the subject, but promised it should have his earliest consideration, but from that time to this no further steps have been taken.

“ The result has been a fight, and several on both sides have been killed.

“ The tribe, since their country has become a portion of her Majesty's dominions, has never been asked to pay taxes, although a large sum appropriated for that purpose now lies idle in its possession.

“At the present time I believe they are loyal, at least the rightful heir's party are, yet all consider they have been neglected.”

I am well aware of the difficulties my country has had to contend with lately in South Africa; still, I think that an urgent effort should have been made, even for no other reason than for the sake of setting example, in a case like this.

“Gopani, the rightful heir, is a Christian; E'Calapin, the pretender, is not,” said my informant.

That showed me at once where his leaning was.

“Whether Christians or not,” say I, “justice should be done, to show the native tribes that we Englishmen are too honourable to make a distinction.”

Kaffirs, as a rule, are terribly ignorant; nay, it is with few exceptions that we find any that possess the most trifling elements of education; but they highly appreciate honour.

Gopani, the legal heir, paid me a visit next day, and listened to all I had to say.

“I will call my people together to-morrow, and consult them; next day after I will give you an answer,” was his response.

“You know my Government could *commandere* you if they thought proper, but they do not wish to act towards you as the Boers did,” I responded.

“I know that well; what you say is correct; but although I am chief, I never do anything with-

out talking to my old men. Moreover, you come to me as my neighbour to borrow my oxen or my waggons, not to take them from me by force," was his answer.

An hour after he sent me a fat sheep, with the following message: "You have travelled far, and must be hungry and tired; eat and rest with us; your people are now my people."

This young man was wondrously courteous and prepossessing, about five feet eleven inches in height, with a most pleasing expression of countenance, while the symmetry of his figure was perfect.

With the exception of Kama, king of Bamanwato, I never was so captivated with a coloured man.

The succeeding day being Sunday, I went to the humble, unpretending church, to hear my friend read the service (Lutheran) and preach. In the place of worship there were no other white men, although the congregation must have mustered at least one hundred and fifty persons.

All were dressed in European clothes—a little gaudy, it is true, in colouring, but neater or cleaner no people could have been.

The service appeared to me rather long, but this did not try their patience.

The perfect quiet that reigned throughout the building would have put an English audience to the blush!

The singing was also excellent; the most

fastidious ear could not have found fault with it—except that of a professional.

The scene was wondrously impressive, and certainly extraordinary when we regard it as the result of the teaching of *one* man, and that in the short period of eighteen years.

There is one little thing I cannot help mentioning—it nearly made me laugh. You must confess that the circumstance was trying to any person who could appreciate a joke.

There were several communicants—I think eight—so on the communion-table stood the wine in a black bottle, and what label do you suppose that bottle bore upon it? Give it up? Well, nothing less than that of the immortal “Bass’s pale ale, bottled by Foster of London.”

I did not taste the stuff inside the glass tene-ment, to tell my readers whether the contents were beer, or that another liquid had been substituted. I imagine the latter must have been the case, as the clergyman did not employ a cork-screw before doling it out, nor did I see any refractory foam come over the edges of the chalice.

After a one o’clock dinner, I walked through the kraals, and spent a couple of hours among the people. They treated me with the greatest courtesy.

Some one having informed Gopani of my being in his proximity, he came and asked me to visit him, and I did so. He was living in a fairly comfortable two-roomed house. On my entering

an American rocking-chair was produced for my special use; and while resting in this most comfortable invention of human ingenuity, I discovered numerous dark-eyed, woolly-pated, handsome-figured and well-limbed members of the community "taking stock" of me.

These were the wife, sisters, and other female relations of the young chief, to whom I was not introduced.

At last the inevitable Kaffir beer was brought forth. With much suffering and martyrdom I took two drinks, and as soon after as was admissible begged to be excused remaining, on the grounds of urgent private affairs. My request was at once granted. It is indeed a pity that my old colonel of "The Royals" had not been sent here to learn courtesy.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOSTILE CHIEFS.

My horses are having an uncommonly good time of it here. They have the run of Mr. Jansen's stockyard and of the hill sides, with a good feed of soaked mealies night and morning. Bobby and Tommy look fresh and fit; but the big bay horse has had a severe attack of diarrhœa, which, I fear, will incapacitate him from going any further; while the mutilated state of the pony's mouth has so hindered his feeding, that he has fallen off to such an extent as to render him totally unfit for the severe service before him.

It behoves me therefore to obtain another horse, but the cost of such an animal here as would suit my purpose, I fear, will not be less than sixty pounds—a sum I feel very disinclined to part with.

It is a sad thing to have to deal with public money, more particularly in a place where no receipts can be obtained.

Possibly this last statement of mine may need explanation.

A large proportion of the Boer population are

unable to write; the half-educated will neither sign a receipt nor write their names across a cheque, nor will they receive a cheque in payment for anything. Of course the remainder—the educated part of the inhabitants of Dutch descent—are as liberal and advanced as any other civilized people.

I cannot help thinking often that the ignorance of so large a number of these people is owing to the *Predicants*, or preachers, who prefer to keep their flocks in subservience. It is a remarkable fact that these men invariably commence life poor as the proverbial church mouse, and in a few years possess large flocks and herds. They are incessantly travelling about the country, and are received with open doors; consequently they have no outlay; and their fees for marrying and christening appear, to the eye of an European, preposterously large.

While sitting on the porch, superintending the stuffing of my saddles—for a man, to travel with success in these regions, must be a Jack-of-all trades—a tall, erect figure, followed by a dozen attendants, approached me.

E'Calapin is the leader of this band.

Pretender as he may be, a right-royal-looking personage he is! bears himself like a soldier, looks you straight and resolutely in the face, and has that physique which denotes a capacity for enduring great fatigue, and which is also capable of great activity.

He is very black, the eye is large, with an expression of severity and determination.

His clothes are European ; and, contrary to the habit of the majority of chiefs, he has well-made boots upon his feet.

After being introduced by Mr. Jansen, and chairs having been brought upon the verandah, the chief, missionary, and myself seated ourselves ; whilst the swarthy retinue, each armed with a knobkerry, squat in a circle around, all eyes and ears to see and hear whatever takes place. From his countenance it is easy to see that the object of my visit is not approved by him, nor indeed by his retainers.

For ten minutes, what we should in Scotland call a "dour" expression rests on his face ; nevertheless, his manner is not without a certain charm. He urges many objections to what I propose, but never interrupts me while I am speaking. In twenty minutes the interview was over, and he had assured me that he would call the heads of his people together, and visit me in two days to give me his answer.

These delays are most trying ; but I am informed that both chiefs have villages of considerable size at distances of thirty or forty miles off ; so, if it be the habit of the people, and has been practised by their forefathers, to consult all the minor headmen, I cannot expect that they will waive it on my account.

In the afternoon Gopani sent me a very nice

lad, who is to accompany me wherever I please to go, his life to be the penalty if accident me befall.

He is a relative of the chief, but unfortunately speaks neither Dutch nor English, and, from his delicate physique, I should imagine to be incapable of supporting either fatigue or exposure.

Next day I made an alteration in my intended mode of travelling, purchasing a light spring Cape cart, which could carry three people.

I was advised to this step, as it would not only enable me to convey my baggage, but also a cooking-pot, a few plates, knives, and forks. As in future I shall have to sleep so much out on the veldt, if not more so than in shelter, these additions will be of invaluable service.

Thus Tommy and Bobby will have to go into harness, and I very much doubt if either of them have ever done so before.

The following day I received both chiefs, for as one was departing the other arrived. It was perfectly grand to see the rivals pass each other!

Their courtesy was worthy of the old French *régime*, but not so was the conduct of the followers.

Each scowled upon the retainers of the adverse house, and if I had not been present knobkerrys would have been brought into play, and doubtless many heads broken.

The scene reminded me of the Montague and

Capulet passing each other in the streets, as described by the immortal bard!

The answers of E'Calapin and Gopani to me were identical.

They feared that they could not afford to give me people, yet still would do their best during the interval of my absence, so that I was not to consider that they had refused my request.

My own opinion is that both these worthies feared to weaken his party, lest the other should take advantage of it to obtain the sole chieftainship.

Through one of the followers of Gopani I learnt that E'Calapin had a Hottentot living among his portion of the tribe, who could speak English and Dutch, as well as Bechuana, had some knowledge of horses, and could drive.

I sent a message to E'Calapin by Mr. Jansen's principal servant. When this man stated the object of his visit, the chief got into a terrible rage, particularly when he was told through what source I had received my information.

However, thinking better of the matter, in the evening the man I wanted arrived.

He looked a scoundrel of the first water, and commenced by being saucy.

I told him what he had to expect if that were his usual mode of proceeding, which caused him to come down several pegs in as many seconds.

So as to make an early start in the morning, I had both horses put into harness.

It was exactly as I had anticipated. Tommy was perfectly willing to draw, but Bob refused point-blank; however, after a due amount of application of my whip, I got them both started, and drove them a few miles, both going fairly for green animals; but as their mouths were anything but those of harness horses, in their present uneducated state, we got into a dry sand-crack, when there was "the devil to pay" and no mistake.

Under trying ordeals such as these, losing temper is the worst possible thing that can happen; so we unharnessed, got assistance, and pulled the trap out, after which the animals were again hitched to the conveyance; but Bob thought proper to back instead of going forward, and once more the cart got into a ditch.

A second time the same performance had to be repeated, and the results were more fortunate.

In the evening the big bay horse, who, to my great regret, has been growing worse and worse—so much so indeed, that I fear he will never carry a rider again—caused me great uneasiness. Poor brute, he has travelled so many miles with me now, and done his work so well, that I feel more than an ordinary amount of attachment for him, and it is evident that he does the same for me.

I cannot go out of doors without his following me about. If I stop walking for a moment, his head will be immediately upon my shoulder,

and as the discharge from his nostrils much resembles "farcy," this is anything but pleasant.

Three or four times it flashed across my mind that it might be the premonitory symptoms of glanders, and consequently it would be my duty to destroy him; but I hesitated before taking such a step, so long as a single doubt remained.

From all inquiries I made, the latter disease is almost unknown, which gave me further grounds to hope for the best in reference to him.

Ultimately, the poor sufferer drove me into the house, for neither sticks nor shouts would keep him from besieging me.

This is a curious characteristic of the African horse, and one which I have often noticed before. Let them but get sick, and by a sublime instinct they seek man's assistance as the only thing to aid them in their infirmity.

A most curious incident illustrative of this occurred.

No person being about, and the hall door being open, the invalid walked through it into the hall, and from thence into a bedroom, obviously in search of me. From his tremendous height, and the lowness of the doors, it seemed surprising to everybody how he got in; and long and difficult were the efforts made by us to turn him out.

Unwelcome guest he must have known himself to be, but he was positively resolved not to be denied. At length, by dint of sheer shoving and

pulling, the delinquent was ousted from the chamber he had taken possession of.

But our troubles did not cease here; for when forced into the hall he looked as if he had made a determined resolution that he would pass the night *there*, at any rate.

If the poor wretch had been in his ordinary health, and therefore strength, I believe he would have baffled all our efforts; as it was, he pretty actively occupied our attention for upwards of a quarter of an hour.

Was there one of us who did not feel for him? So that when he found himself in the yard, there were several volunteers desirous to do something to render the poor brute more comfortable for the night.

One got bedding, another a Kaffir blanket, and a third made him a good warm mash, while I administered to him a pint of hot rum and water, swimming in butter and seasoned with about an ounce of ground ginger.

From the way he enjoyed the latter, it was evident that he had no personal objection to the use of ardent spirits; and this fact I recommend to the close attention of the well-known and worthy father superior of the English teetotal movement.

While residing here I did not sleep in the main house, but in a small bedroom at the north end of the building, in which was the workshop. In consequence, when I retired to rest, I had to pass Katrina, the baboon.

This animal and I had struck up a most extraordinary friendship from the first moment. It appeared surprising to me that she should do so, as she mortally hated every Kaffir that came near the station.

It has frequently amused me to see her crouch and hide herself behind the tree—to which she was made fast—all the time squinting round its side to notice whether the object of her enmity would come within reach of her chain.

One unfortunate man, with a new wideawake on his head, and a sound, though not clean blanket round his shoulders, did inadvertently do so.

With a spring like that of a leopard, she was upon him in an instant, had his hat off with one hand, and with the other tore the blanket from the bottom right up to the shoulders; and the poor Kaffir was so taken aback that I almost expected him to faint.

Strange as it may appear, Katrina would never let me pass of an evening without bidding me good-night, mumbling some odd jargon as if to express her thanks for my taking notice of her. I suppose I gained her good will through kindness, for many were the oranges, lemons, and onions I used to bring her. She would sit for half an hour at a time opposite any person to whom she was attached, and catch mealies in her mouth that were thrown to her.

The only way I could ever make her walk upon her hind legs was by giving her some delicacy

divided into two parts, so that each hand held a portion of the *bonne bouche*. Then if I were to take her chain and force her to move, she would walk perfectly upright, and with apparent ease.

To see her attack a scorpion was most ridiculous. If anybody brought her one, and threw it on the ground before her, the moment it dropped she would place her hand upon it, and instantaneously begin rubbing back and forward with surprising velocity for upwards of a couple of minutes. By that time the venomous creature was rendered perfectly innocuous, when she would place it in her mouth and chew it up as if it were delicious. Truly wonderful is Nature in all her ways!

CHAPTER XXV.

A FRESH START.

O FATE! cruel Fate! why am I treated thus?

I was up and out in the morning before the first streak of dawn had announced the coming day, even long before my attendants had arrived.

The preceding evening I had packed everything into the smallest compass, and kind, good-hearted Mrs. Jansen had given me one of her own coffee-kettles, with a couple of plates and several knives and forks; also had baked for me four large loaves of bread, and furnished me with some thirty to forty pounds of cold cooked meat. Nor were pepper and salt wanting. These I carried from my room, and carefully stowed away in such positions as they were least likely to get broken.

At sunrise my attendants made their appearance, and it was evident from the first moment that they would not work harmoniously together.

In Gopani's relative I felt the greatest confidence—in the other I did not; but the unfortunate circumstance was, that I had to communicate all my orders to the former through the latter.

My troubles commenced at the start.

The horses being cold, through standing out all night, had an obvious objection to work, and refused to move.

After the exercise of some patience, I succeeded in inducing them to alter their resolution, but in a few minutes afterwards we came to a full stop; and at least half an hour was lost before the journey was renewed. Much whipping and coercion was here necessary, which I object to, for the reason that five minutes of severe punishment takes more out of an animal than many hours' work.

Again we move forward, pass through the kraals, debouch to the right, go down a steep incline, traverse a river at a very bad ford, and ascend a steep slope.

For the next half-mile the road is tolerably good, when we turn due west, and begin to climb a range of hills, fully fifteen hundred feet in altitude.

The road at first was fairly good, but by degrees it became worse and worse; on that account we all got out and walked, each of the boys taking a horse by the head.

But stones and boulders blocked the way, so as to make it no easy task for them to draw even an empty cart. Ultimately they refused to pull; the whip was again applied, but in this instance with different results; for the animals became restive, broke loose from their leaders, and dashed off to the right over a small plateau. In front of

them was a ravine, so perpendicular on its sides, that it might almost have been called a precipice. I fully expected that they would go over it, and alas! what then. All my fair hopes would have been dashed to the ground.

Fortunately the sagacity of the animals told them when to stop; and it was with the deepest feelings of gratitude that I laid hold upon the ribbons, and piloted them back to the road. But ascend it they would not.

I used every expedient and measure that I had ever known employed on such occasions, even to putting up the Hottentot to drive, and myself and the other boy placing our shoulders to the felloes of each wheel.

By this means we advanced possibly a hundred yards more, when another halt took place, from which neither persuasion nor skill could induce them to move.

It was of no use. I felt thoroughly non-plussed; and worse than all, the floggings which had already been administered must have taken several days' work out of my animals, which I was so anxious to keep fresh and capable for the long and painful journey before them.

I sat down upon an adjoining stone. My attendants unhitched the horses, and there and then we held a consultation.

My first idea was that some of the chiefs might have harness horses, but this I was assured they had not.

As a *dernier ressort*, I determined to send Gopani's boy to Mr. Jansen's, and inform him how I was situated.

The willing lad bolted off like a hare to perform his mission.

He had scarcely been gone over a quarter of an hour when I espied him returning, accompanied by another, mounted on the back of a white horse.

In twenty minutes they were with me.

This fortunate arrival was a godsend to me, and it is thus to be accounted for. Mrs. Jansen, through her telescope, having some misgivings that I should not succeed in ascending the hill with my own horses, had, like a true sailor's wife, watched my progress, and thus becoming cognizant of the strait in which I was placed, despatched one of her servants with their old and tried cart-horse, to add to my team. Soon he was fastened to the pole, as leader. He was a sorry old brute to look at, but big and muscular, and in his youth I should imagine must have been possessed of great power.

However, he was willing and patient; so once more we commenced ascending—driving unicorn. More slowly than a funeral procession ever advanced, we toiled forwards; one time we would gain ten yards, the next twenty, until we reached within four or five hundred feet of the summit.

From here the pathway was a perfect jumble

of loose stones, and how we had to toil and sweat, and pull and shove, no one knows, unless such as have ascended similar places.

I have driven up many a hillside in my life. I have now in my memory numbers, which it is almost considered a feat to have overcome, but nothing before in my existence have I witnessed like this diabolical place. I give due credit to my horses, and particularly to the gallant old beast that was lent me. At length, after a long length I may say, the jumble of stones gave way by degrees to soil; rapidly and more rapidly, and with fewer halts we climb upward; and after a few more exertions, thank God! I look out over the ridge and see an undulating, unlimited veldt extending before me, here and there covered with clumps of trees.

An immediate cessation from labour ensues, the horses are taken out and knee-haltered, and a halt of half an hour follows.

I was actually too worn out to do anything, and threw myself on the ground, under the glare of the powerful sun, and lay for some time almost in a state of coma.

As the distance before us that we had to traverse was upwards of forty-five miles, it became necessary for us to be again up and at work. But when I arose to assist in harnessing, I felt a well-known pain, that reminded me of the past, stealing through my bones. I halted for a moment and pulled myself together, while I

mentally ejaculated, "Old fellow ! you have once more got African jungle fever."

The remedy was at hand.

A dose of quinine, that would have half filled a tea-spoon. I took it, in full confidence of the effect, and in a quarter of an hour was able to proceed forward.

It is seldom, or I may say never, that one hears of a person dying of a *coup de soleil* in Africa ; yet I will say, without fear of contradiction, that it possesses the cruellest and most uncompromising sun that is to be found in any part of the world, particularly at that season of the year when the grass is all burnt off the face of the earth, and nothing but a rusty brown, bare soil surrounds you. The sun here seems fairly to beat you down ; you struggle against it, fight against it, and resolve not to be overcome. For a minute or two afterwards you lift your legs higher, and walk forward with renewed energy and lengthened stride ; but gradually and inadvertently you discover, in spite of all your efforts, that you are relapsing into your former gait.

Before starting I gave Mr. Jansen's boy a handsome "baksheesh," and told him to thank his kind master and mistress, and to speed home as rapidly as possible, in case his services should be required. But not only was I indebted to the missionary for this valuable aid that the lad had afforded me, but I was to be a further recipient of his favours, for the servant had received orders to leave the white horse with me.

Thus he was placed in harness alongside of Tommy, while Bob was led ; so, in this form of cavalcade, we renewed our journey.

The country now before us was dried-up veldt. For the first ten or twelve miles scarcely a blade of grass could be seen ; after then the sterility gradually disappeared, and mother earth looked once more pleasant under a green covering.

About what I should judge to be, by the altitude of the sun, half-past two, we again unharnessed, made a fire, produced the coffee-pot and cold meat, and forthwith set to, to enjoy a picnic meal. I was hungry, and ate, I should think, quite a pound of mutton ; but my boys were hungrier, and consumed at least five pounds apiece.

This taught me a lesson—namely, never to leave cold mutton in the way of these fellows, or else a well-stocked larder would rapidly become empty.

Every available corner of the waggon-box was filled, to my surprise, with oranges. Good Mrs. Jansen, when my back had been turned, having added these delicious fruit, knowing well they were a luxury I should not enjoy for many and many a day to come.

So we each had one, it being my rule to divide fairly whatever I have, of the edible order, with my boys.

Again we were under weigh—Bobby alongside the white horse, and Tommy led.

Timber became more abundant as we advanced, and the grass more rank. Spring-bok were

occasionally seen crossing the road; however, our destination was still many a mile before us, so we hurried on, regardless of the opportunity we had of killing game.

There is no question of it now; we have crossed the Rubicon, and are beyond the limits of civilization. You may look to all the "airs" of the wind, and over these flats the eye can distinguish a long way, but not a single sign of human habitation is in sight. One uninterrupted, unbroken flat, extends around you, here and there dotted with a clump of brushwood or a solitary mimosa-tree, but nothing else to intercept the vision.

The horses become more and more tired, the old white one in particular, who is outpaced by his younger and consequently fleetier companion.

Thus a halt is decided upon at the first convenient place.

Soon a desirable situation is reached. The sun is just setting straight in our front, surrounded by all its African glories; and as the luminary disappears, the horses are taken out, knee-haltered, and allowed half an hour to feed. E'Calapin's boy at once set himself to work to make a fire, and prepare the camp, while Gopani's lad acts as herd to prevent the horses straying, or possibly returning to Linakani.

That night I slept soundly, the ground under the cart being my bed, and did not awake till sunrise, although the Hottentot informed me that

hyenas had been howling around us all night. What matters that? I am an old traveller; and the voice of wild animals has long ago ceased to be, for me, anything but a soothing and cheerful lullaby.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BLACK BEAUTIES.

As soon as I was moving the horses were untied, knee-haltered, and turned loose to feed for a few hours. I remained in camp, while the Hottentot took the rifle and went off in search of game.

Fortunately we had brought a "*vatchee*" of water with us, so about nine o'clock I began preparing another *al fresco* meal. The kettle had scarcely boiled, when the herd brought the horses home, and each of them received several handfuls of mealies. This is a most dangerous grain to use as feed in large quantities, unless it has been steeped. The mutton was again produced, and I was about to carve off a portion of it to cook over the embers, when the *Tottie* appeared with a *duykerbok* over his shoulders.

This necessitated a little delay; for, with fresh meat in such quantities, I resolved to have a thorough good repast.

In five minutes the carcase was divested of its skin, and the kidneys, liver, and heart underwent a very trifling ablution before being placed upon

the fire. Water not being found here, we have to be particularly careful of it, so none is thrown away uselessly.

I frequently think that the Kaffir, or Bechuana—in fact, any of the hunting races of Africa—are never seen to such advantage as when sitting over a fire, on which hisses a good supply of fresh meat. Their eyes seem to enlarge themselves, their mouths open, showing their white teeth, while they sit toasting themselves—I had almost said roasting themselves—with their hands spread in front of their faces. It is upon such occasions as these that they become communicative, and narrate all the petty scandals that vex the society of their respective villages, or tell of their deeds of prowess in the hunting or battle-field.

It does not take long to cook fresh meat over glowing embers; ten minutes will render it edible to a white man, and half that period for a black one. Another thing which has struck me as being remarkable is, that all these natives will take flesh off the fire so hot that no white man could touch it with his bare fingers, yet they will shove it into their mouths without flinching, and apparently enjoy it with the greatest gusto.

By ten o'clock we were again *en route*. The horses appeared to have suffered a great deal by the task imposed upon them the day before. Thus we determined to start but drive slowly, in order to lose as little time as could be, and

to make some progress ; while the horses would, by this course, overcome their stiffness.

The country is much the same in appearance as that through which we passed yesterday, with the exception that trees are now becoming more numerous—a certain indication that we are approaching water.

"Take the reins, Baas !" exclaimed the Hottentot hurriedly.

Mechanically I did so, at the same time inquiring, "What is it ?"

But ere I could receive any reply he had glided out of the conveyance, pulled out the rifle from the back of the cart, and disappeared into the surrounding brush.

I was going to pull up, when the other lad signalled for me to go slowly on.

A few moments later I heard the well-known report of my Martini-Henry. I knew that if the weapon was held straight it was sure to kill, so was not surprised to see the driver return, dragging behind him by the leg a splendid springbok. I believe this fellow to be a capital hunter ; but as, up to this date, he has only fired two shots, and killed on each occasion, the inroad into my ammunition will not be so great as I had anticipated ; and it is a most valuable commodity, for where I now am it will be impossible to replenish my stock.

I praised his shooting, at which he appeared to be intensely gratified.

Heretofore I had kept him in his place, and seldom spoke to him; but the few words I had just expressed seemed to give him licence to enter into conversation. In this manner he commenced it.

“You should have been with me last year, Bass! I was shooting up on the Mabawbee veldt, and had rare sport. Killed two hundred and forty elephants myself; and as to rhinoster and sea-cows, you could not have counted them!”

I quietly asked him if he would not mention three hundred at once, and his answer, which was perfectly self-possessed, was—

“It is possible I did not count them correctly!”

We now commenced a descent, which lasted for upwards of six or seven miles, when the clear, bright waters of the Molipo were seen. It is a stream about the size of the Dove, in Derbyshire, and, like it, broken into numerous pools and rapids.

Here we outspanned, that the horses might rest, and have as much of the precious liquid as they chose.

While preparing our coffee we were surrounded by a perfect bevy of black beauties, many of whom wore the costume of Europeans, with blue, pink, or scarlet skirts, and who almost invariably had a bright yellow handkerchief tied over their heads. A few were more scantily clad, only having a carosse fastened over their shoulders. We have not progressed far enough north yet to find the

full dress of the female population as that of Eve —*minus the fig-leaf*.

The occasion of this assembly was because several marriages had taken place in the morning, and the inhabitants of the district were making merry in consequence, as the custom is for the relatives of the bride to kill an ox or a sheep, according to their means, the flesh of which, when cooked, is given to all comers.

I sent for the chief. An old, weather-beaten man made his appearance, who seemed half fuddled with Kaffir beer. This may not have been the case, as his nervousness might have resulted from disinclination or dislike to the subject I broached. However, the upshot was, that he was not a free agent, and therefore he could answer neither way, but would refer the matter to his suzerain, the chief at Lotligani, to whose headquarters I was now proceeding.

Nevertheless, the old fellow shook hands with me before parting, doubtless the result of being rather glad to get rid of my importunities. The festive crowd of Hebes, with their swains, still continued their amusements in my vicinity. They danced frequently. The figure, which was far from unattractive, resembled much some of those old country-dances we used to delight in a quarter of a century ago, and it was certainly as boisterous as Sir Roger de Coverley. Frequently merry peals of laughter from each Terpsichorean would rise and fall. Whether this was part of the pro-

gramme, or produced at the awkwardness of some of the performers, I was unable to learn.

The situation selected on the banks of the Molipo was admirably suited for such a purpose; and but for the black faces and wonderfully brilliant costumes, it required little stretch of imagination for the beholder to believe he was in England.

My attendants seemed to enjoy the fun amazingly; in fact, judging from appearances, they were being made quite lions of, and romped as vociferously as any in the crowd; so much so, that when I considered it time to make a fresh start, I had some difficulty in getting them away.

When they left the revellers, the entire crowd broke up and followed them to the cart, some of the men going so far as to assist in bringing up the horses, and giving aid to put them into harness, while the ladies kept their voluble tongues incessantly going, I do not doubt upbraiding me for depriving them of such agreeable companions.

At length the Hottentot said to me,—

“Bass, which of all these women do you think the nicest?”

“I fear they would deem me rude if I looked sufficiently close at them to make a decision.”

“No, they would not!” he answered.

Now I have all my life been possessed of great temerity in the presence of ladies; in fact I may almost say the feeling amounts to bashfulness; so

I retorted with the desire of getting rid of the subject,—

"I'm certain they would."

"You see, Bass," was the laconic reply; and in an instant after my fellow was in their midst, had said some talismanic sentence, and in a moment all of them were standing facing me in a single file.

This was one of the moments of my life in which my fortitude was sadly tried. I dared not run away, still less be guilty of want of courtesy; so I resolved to do what the old Scotch proverb tells us, "Put staigh heart to a stiff brae." Moreover, I don't think a fellow feels as nervous in the presence of a black woman as he would before a white one.

So resolved to do or die, I walked down the line both front and rear. There were so many—fifty or sixty—I suppose, that I found it impossible to come to a hurried conclusion, for fear I should do an injustice; and, of all things, that is the last action I should like to be guilty of.

Besides, there was another reason—viz., that there really were some winsome lasses among them.

So I took a second tour of inspection, much more scrutinizing than the first, and still I was not satisfied. If the ranks had broken up now I would have said no more; but there they stood, steady as a rock, awaiting the verdict. To hesitate is to be lost; so I just thought I would take another turn up and down the rank and file.

Even more carefully than before I passed up the front. One young lady of about sixteen I took special notice of. This time I particularly noted the colour of her headgear, and what was her number from the left flank; so in passing along the rear, when directly behind her position, I quietly touched her on the shoulder. In an instant she faced to the right-about, when I presented her with an orange; and before any of her comrades could stop her she was off, like an arrow from a bow, out over the veldt, and the entire crowd after her. She might not have been the swiftest, but she was certainly the cleverest; for never did I see such doubles; no hare before a greyhound could have surpassed them.

I scarcely ever laughed more in my life, the scene was so truly ludicrous; and what made it even more so was that the pursued and pursuers pulled up their stiffly-starched, light print dresses almost to their knees, to permit their limbs to have freer action; and as all were guiltless of shoes and stockings, their black feet and ankles looked very funny.

The hunt lasted at least five minutes before the runaway was captured; but by this time she had devoured, not the apple, but orange of discord.

Would you believe it? these young ladies wanted to play this game again; and it was nearly as violent as lawn tennis, though probably a little more graceful. But I declined with thanks; for I thought, if often repeated, it would

be rather rough on my oranges. As I had nothing to give them but my blessing, I sought out an appropriate text, which I delivered from the cart standing: "Be virtuous, and you will be happy; but you won't have a good time."

"Drive on, boy! What the deuce are you stopping for? Am I master of this 'ere craft, or are you? Hurry up; do you hear?"

And he lingeringly started the horses.

When we had been about five minutes under weigh, feelingly he inquired of me,—

"Don't you think, Bass, that we had better stop here all night?"

"I have got the tooth-ache, sir—bad, sir. Speak another word to me, and the consequences will be awful." So we continued proceeding.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HORSE LOST.

“THE shades of night were falling fast” as a white and a black man, two horses, and an African cart, entered the precincts of the Baralong village of Lotligani. In fact, the shades had fallen; for first, my confounded Tottie almost drove over a bullock. Of course, after the manner of masters, I there and then angrily reproved him for his carelessness, although I confess I did not see the animal till after the brute had nearly caused us serious damage. Bullocks should really be more careful in selecting their sleeping-places; if they are impervious to harm, other people are not. Soon afterwards my servant placed me on the verge of a hole, almost as deep as a well, out of which soil for making bricks had been dug. I believe this driver could see a mosquito on the darkest night if he chose; but his thoughts and himself were both absent at Molipo. So I gave him a dig in the ribs, just to remind him that I had no wish to be hurried out of this wicked world yet a while; and the only observation he made was, “Oh, Bass!” But I noticed with

satisfaction that he drove more carefully afterwards.

What is it to me, I should like to know, if a man is weak enough to be bewitched by a lot of girls! Such weakness *I* never heard of; and then the wretch—I regret to say it; was the like ever seen?—has two wives at home pining on account of his absence!

There is no satisfying some people. Set him up with two wives! Begad! there is many a poor fellow who has got but one, and would be charmed to have none at all.

And perhaps the poor things are crying for him while he is *cavorting* himself about the country. Just fancy crying for a black fellow like this, and he one of the ugliest, bandy-legged, yellow-skinned, woolly-headed scoundrels that ever the sun shone on! I am certain nobody would cry for me, quite certain; although I believe, if it were left to unprejudiced judges, I am the better looking of the two.

But there are lights twinkling; it must be the town at last, thank goodness! for, although trying to be facetious, I feel awfully tired. My goodness! what would I not give for a bottle of Bass, a good-sized piece of bread and cheese, and then to turn in, even upon a clean floor, let alone a bed. I hope the ants to-night will only be in hundreds instead of thousands. I wonder if any person in England ever had a thousand ants for his bed-fellows. That is a new sensation—I assert

without fear of contradiction—to one who has not enjoyed it before. And so I moralized as the deepened shadows of numerous beehive-like huts commenced to surround us.

Before leaving Zeerust, Mr. Van Yepren, Landdrost of Haute-Marico, informed me that he had heard a rumour that an officer of the Intelligence Department occasionally visited Lotligani, whose head-quarters were at the Diamond Fields in Griqualand West. Thus I had determined to find this gentleman on my arrival if it were possible.

As we piloted our way through the intricacies of numerous Baralong kraals, not without having run into sundry hedges, and made frequent escapes, we ultimately met one of the natives, evidently of the gay and festive order.

On inquiring from him if he knew where Mr. Bethel resided, he volunteered, for a pecuniary remuneration, to take us to his house.

After about three quarters of an hour, threading in and out and to and fro, we reached a mud cabin with dilapidated thatched roof, an attempt at a wattle fence enclosing the front.

Here I dismounted, and knocked at the door; but as no answer was given to my summons, I struck a match and looked into the dwelling.

At a glance it was easy to perceive that it had not been inhabited for some time.

Disgusted, I returned to the cart, and rather hotly pitched into the guide for not having told me Mr. Bethel was ~~from~~ home.

With the utmost self-possession he retorted,—

"You did not ask for Mr. Bethel, but for Mr. Bethel's house! Mr. Bethel has gone to the Diamond Fields."

Being desirous of making further use of this sharp individual, I next asked him, Was there a trader in the station? He informed me that there was. I then requested him to show me where he resided.

After another long tramp, as wearying as its predecessor, I reached a most tumble-down structure of clay, the back portion of which was enclosed by a yard. I made some noise falling over several obstacles, and being vociferously bayed at by two or three curs which seemed instigated by a particular desire to become more intimately acquainted with my calves, when a voice hailed me from within. I responded that I was a Government servant, travelling on duty; and he immediately told me to wait where I was, while he brought a light.

In the course of some minutes a very young man, apparently suffering from a severe attack of fever, made his appearance and welcomed me most hospitably.

Soon the horses were out of harness and placed in a sheltered corner, where they were provided with an ample feed of barley, blanketed, and made comfortable for the night.

I then entered my new friend's domicile. It was composed of wattle and daub, and had doubt-

less once stood erect, only the winds had taken a fancy to it, and in their playfulness given it a slope much greater than the tower of Pisa. They had also made holes in various parts of the building, of such magnitude that it required rather a stretch of imagination to believe you were inside a house. However, such as it was, I was made welcome to. After a little delay a fire was kindled, and some very tough goat produced, which all of us carefully tended during the cooking process.

A person would have supposed that, with such ventilators in the walls and roof, we should not have been troubled with smoke. However, such was by no means the case, for it rested around us in so dense a fog as to render a view of my neighbour an utter impossibility. I informed him that I had sought Mr. Bethel, and of my disappointment on not finding him, and he confirmed what the guide had told me, but proposed that I should sleep where that gentleman usually did—in an adjoining building which had been erected for a store, but which, unfortunately, had never attained completion. In an hour, or thereabouts, I retired to rest, enwrapped in a couple of blankets, and, lying on a truckle bedstead, slept the sleep of the weary.

Before going further, let me state that the white horse Mr. Jansen had lent me knocked up at Molipo, and that I was obliged to leave it behind with Gopani's boy, who was instructed to drive it on after us as rapidly as possible.

Up to this hour he had not put in an appearance, which caused me no small amount of uneasiness.

I have no recollection this night of having been troubled by ants or other disagreeable insects. Possibly I am now becoming a pachyderm, for I did not wake until sunrise.

When I had made my ablutions, in a saucepan which held about a pint of water, I prepared myself for my day's work.

This I commenced by sending a messenger to the chief to inform him of my arrival, and to express a desire that I might have an interview with him as soon as was possible.

When at breakfast a kind of forerunner, or rather spy, came down to inspect me, and so thoroughly had this fellow been trained that he would have done credit to Fouché.

After further delay I was told that the chief, Monsewah, would pay me a visit in the course of the morning; and as nothing could be done until this meeting should take place, I spent the intermediate time in grooming the horses and looking after their comforts.

My missing boy and horse had not yet turned up, and the lengthened delay caused me much anxiety.

I made several efforts to get persons to go in search of him, but without success, although I promised them handsome payment.

The indifference with which these people treat

money is remarkable; still it may be just possible that my not having yet seen the chief prevented their performing any service for me.

However, at two o'clock the truant appeared, minus the horse. His story was simple.

He had followed us slowly along, as the poor animal was too exhausted to travel faster than at a snail's pace. When he arrived in Lotligani, he could not discover where we were, so he knee-haltered his charge and took shelter for the night in a Kaffir's kraal. In the morning the worn-out beast was nowhere to be found, so he had spent all the forenoon in unsuccessfully looking for it.

After providing him with a good feed, I despatched him to renew his search.

Two, three, four o'clock passed, and Monsewah had not visited me.

Of course this delay is most provoking; but as this chief has great power, and very numerous subjects, it is absolutely necessary calmly to submit to the indignity. I sent him, however, a gentle reminder to the effect, that if he could not come to me, as he was a much older man than myself, if he would let me know where he was, I would visit him.

About sun-down, when standing outside the premises, a man in a black coat galloped past; his legs and arms were going like the sails of a wind-mill, and the reins flying loose about his horse's neck.

He had hardly rode by above a couple of hundred

yards when his steed made a stumble, and the rider got one of those beautiful falls which evoke admiration in all true horsemen.

I took no notice of the circumstance, but soon after entered our primitive dwelling to see if there were any more of the tough goat, and what prospect there might be of my getting some of it.

Scarcely had I been seated a few minutes, when a white person made his appearance, to learn if I could set a broken arm.

Professing my willingness to do so, if no more skilful hand could be obtained, I was led to a neighbouring kraal, where I found the injured man, his arm dislocated at the shoulder.

After a considerable amount of hauling, and no little pain to the sufferer, the injured limb was placed in its proper position. The patient turned out to be the Wesleyan missionary of the station, who never failed to bewail his fate, and to abuse the awkwardness of the confounded brute he had been riding.

The discomfort I suffered here from cold, during the following night, was really dreadful. It would scarcely be believed that, so close to the tropical line of Capricorn, it was possible for such to be the case; and it will rather surprise the reader when I inform him that the mealies, left to steep over night for the horses, were frozen into one solid mass in the morning!

The reason of this is, that the plateau on which Lotligani stands is four thousand seven hundred

feet above the level of the sea. The wind, also, seemed to blow incessantly, and it is quite as penetrating as any that I have ever experienced in Russia, or upon the prairies of the far West.

The climacteric changes in this region are most extraordinary, and particularly trying to the constitution, as the sun, at mid-day, is so insufferably torrid as to be almost past endurance.

In the evening three old men called upon me, and gave me to understand that the chief was at an adjoining village, where some marriage festivities were being carried on, and as the principals were relatives, his presence was necessary, but that I should see him in the morning.

Here the trader whispered to me, "The old fellow is on the spree, and I understand has been as drunk as an owl for the last three days."

Thus we see that the sin, which philanthropists are so constantly bemoaning, is by no means confined to that very estimable little island—England.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LOTLIGANI.

PATIENCE does meet with its reward occasionally ! To my surprise a couple of horses arrived this morning, to take me to visit the chief.

One being a garron, I rejected its use ; and the other I mounted a friend on who had arrived during the night, and whose waggons were outspanned about half a mile from the station.

Bobby, my most imposing steed, I selected for my own riding.

The distance we had to travel did not exceed five miles, and with little difficulty we found the Kotla, where the old chief was seated, in the midst of all his headmen and councillors. Chairs were immediately produced, and we "located" ourselves beside him. The scene was most attractive, for the position was admirably selected for the exhibition of native pomp. From its elevation you could see over a wide extent of country, covered with trees, with here and there large and irregularly shaped rocks cropping out of the soil. True enough there was a marriage

fête going on, and men, women, and children were all dressed in their holiday attire. Outside the place of audience were numbers of the younger members of the community, evidently much enjoying the new excitement, as their merry voices, laughter, and clapping of hands plainly indicated. After the usual compliments I proceeded to business. I briefly as possible stated the object of my visit; and the chief, in response, first inquired why Mr. Bethel was not with me; nor could I at first make him understand how I should have come from the Transvaal and Natal, while the former gentleman hailed from Griqualand West. This required the explanation, that Sir Bartle Frere was the "Great Chief" in Africa; that beneath him were minor chiefs, each in command of districts, the same as he had headmen in charge of villages, and that I had not come from the same one as Mr. Bethel, but from another of equal importance with that of his commanding officer. This explanation evidently pleased him, for he said to one of the headmen, "These white people are truly wonderful!"

Ultimately he informed me that he could take no step without considering, but that if I chose to meet him at Lotligani that evening he would give me an answer.

If the old gentleman had been tipsy the night before, he stood the effects of it singularly well.

He was a hearty old fellow of about sixty-five; was anything but destitute of politeness, with a

soft voice, and I should think was, in his own tongue, an eloquent man, yet he came at once to the point of the subject discussed. He had a formidable number of greyheads around, whose gravity and imperturbability almost amounted to the ludicrous. The whole assemblage stood up as we departed, and I do not think that the interview lasted more than ten minutes.

On returning to our horses, we found ourselves in the middle of all the merrymakers, who were obviously struck with the beauty, proportion, and size of my charger.

When we got into the saddle we had scarcely gone a hundred yards when a large escort of the *élite* of the tribe joined us. They were mounted on Basuto ponies, probably the most surefooted, hardy, and enduring of their race, it being a common expression in Africa for persons to say of these miniature horses, "If you don't press them, they will go for ever."

Another peculiarity of this breed is, that they will thrive, and even grow fat, where another horse would starve.

The young aristocrats thought at first, that by pressing their horses, and making as much noise around me as possible, I should be induced to give Bob his head, and join in a scurry home; but to their disappointment I refused to be guilty of an escapade suitable alone for a pack of school-boys.

At length one spoke to me, and wished to know

if my "kamille" could go faster than he was doing.

I told him "A little!"

As a response he unblushingly affirmed, "My horse can overtake an ostrich!"

"Is he for sale?" I inquired.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because such a valuable animal should never be parted with by your tribe," I remarked. "Keep him, and value him as you would gold!" At this he appeared considerably chagrined.

In the evening I called upon the chief, but he had not returned from the merrymaking; and as I did not choose to lower my dignity by hanging about for his arrival, at an early hour I betook myself to bed.

In the morning I visited his kraal.

After a short delay he joined me, and about a couple of dozen stools were produced, which they arranged in a half-circle. The old man took a seat in the midst, and placed me on his right hand. At my feet sat my interpreter, who, ere we had been conversing five minutes, pulled out and lit a dirty pipe. At this I pitched into him sharply, compelling him to replace it in his pocket.

Monsewah at once wished to learn what was the cause of my wrath, and what I had said.

I told him that in my country, in the presence of persons of rank and position like himself, servants were not permitted to smoke, as it was considered a mark of disrespect.

"Oh!" he said, "you are a great people. I should like to go to England and visit your Queen."

I replied, "Doubtless you would find yourself a welcome guest, and be given a spare bedroom in Buckingham Palace!"

But all this palaver was not doing business, and I reminded him that I was there for that purpose, and also that I had still a long journey to make.

He inquired where I was going.

I gave him a list of the places, deviating a good deal from the truth as I repeated each name, for this old gentleman has a character for being as crafty as any fox.

His smiling expression of countenance changed immediately, and he stated that it grieved him much to hear it, for he feared he should never see his "dear friend again."

"Why?" I inquired.

"Because those savages will kill you; your body will become food for the hyæna and the vulture, and the bones of that noble frame will whiten the earth."

After this poetically expressed and cheering sentiment, I again tried to pin him down to business; when, finding that I was really in earnest, he informed me that nothing could be done so hurriedly, but that, loving every man of his tribe as his own child, he could not part with them to go to such a far distant country

without lengthened and mature consideration. "But," added he, "*when you come back*"—and here his eyes twinkled ironically—"I will do anything to serve my dear friend, as you must know."

There was nothing further for me to do; so, after exchanging mutual professions of admiration, esteem, and respect, I bid adieu, and hastened to make preparations for my departure.

Before leaving here let me say a few words in reference to the locality.

Lotlogani stands in the middle of a vast plain, and there is no water nearer than the Molipo, a distance of six miles, whence it is carried in crocks on the heads of the women.

Still, around it are thousands of acres of mealies and Kaffir corn. When I was there the former crop had been gathered; the latter still stood out, and promised a most abundant harvest.

The women, as elsewhere throughout this region, do all the manual labour, and it was far from a pleasant sight to see them of an evening toiling homewards from their work, bearing on their heads a load sufficient for a donkey, with, not unfrequently in addition, a child strapped on to their backs. Can it then be wondered at how the lithe, beautiful, and well-limbed girls of fourteen or fifteen, become worn out and aged women before they are five-and-twenty? The old chief, at my request, sent out persons to look for the white horse, but up to the present hour nothing has been heard of it.

That it is not dead I am certain, or we should have noticed the vultures circling above where the carcass lay; therefore I have come to the conclusion that it has either wandered off to the Molipo river in search of water, or returned to its former home.

The chief, however, promised me, on consideration of a payment of five shillings, that it shall be found if in his country, and returned by a responsible man to Linakani.

At my sleeping-place I met two gentlemen, just arrived from the Diamond Fields, and they kindly asked me to breakfast with them at the residence of Mr. Bethel—the house where I first alighted on my arrival. They were very agreeable, and the meal was better than I could have anticipated. Both are going to proceed to an adjoining village on business, but as their horses are entirely knocked up, their progress will necessarily be slow, for bullocks must needs be substituted.

By half-past eleven I am again in the cart; Kania, distant about eighty-five miles, being my next stopping place.

The road, I hear, is over the most villainous sand-track, water only occurring twice during the way; so, if we accomplish it in forty-eight hours I shall consider myself fortunate. Worse than all, we shall find no inhabitants on the route, unless by chance we should come across some straggling Buschmen or cattle herds.

The horses seem to be glad once more to find

themselves in harness. Probably they anticipate better days and more comfort in store for them, for they trot right merrily through the station and for a mile across the adjoining flat.

Here I overtake my breakfast acquaintances, hurrying on their way with six young bullocks in front of their light cart. These beasts of burden seem to be getting over the ground in grand style; but the pace is scarcely sufficient to cause surprise when the ear notes with what frequency and severity the whip is applied.

Bidding them adieu, I pull my horses down to a moderate pace and face northward, knowing full well that hard times and short commons are before us all.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DESERT.

IN all my experiences of African travelling I have seldom encountered a road so fearfully heavy as this one! The wheel is constantly up over the felloes in sand, and I consequently know that the draught power of the horses is being most severely tasked. My boys I can make walk, and reduce the rate of speed so as not to overtax their endurance. In an hour and a quarter we cross the Molipo—here almost as pretty as it was where we had formerly seen it. At first timber is tolerably abundant, but it gradually gives way to the uninterrupted grass veldt.

Road! call this a road! I don't doubt that waggons have traversed it; but how far back, and how far between, it is quite impossible to say. To walk upon it is almost as difficult as upon the shingle beach between Portland and Weymouth!

The better to lighten the waggon, and save my animals, I also got out of the cart, having placed the reins over the splash-board, thus leaving the horses almost entirely to their own guidance.

I led the way, the conveyance came next, and the attendants brought up the rear. It was dreadfully fatiguing work. If I had had proper walking-shoes on, it would not have been so much so; but heavy riding-boots up to the knee, and breeches as tight at that part of my limb as they could well be made, are not the kind of nether habiliments most suitable for pedestrian exercise. The sun, moreover, was fearfully hot; and the flies, that hideous plague of this country, kept me in a constant state of intense irritation. If I had been in a Turkish bath I should not have perspired more profusely. Still "*Avanti*" is the word, and thirty miles must be accomplished, if possible, before nightfall.

I call up the Tottie, and have a conversation with him.

"You are certain you know," inquired I, "where that first water is?"

"Yes, Baas; quite certain," is his answer.

"When shall we reach it?" I ask.

"When the sun is *so high*," is his reply, pointing to the horizon due west.

Onwards then we trudge, never more hot and never more thirsty in our lives.

We are now skirting the edge of the Kalahari desert, which stretches westward till the dunes of sand that form its limit are washed by the South Atlantic Ocean.

It is a huge waste when you consider its great magnitude; and all over its extent water is ex-

tremely scarce, although there is a certain amount of scant herbage. Still it has its inhabitants, for many a Buschman with his family lives in its fastnesses, while wild animals of nearly all the descriptions peculiar to South Africa roam fearlessly over its otherwise deserted steppes.

It is doubtful if a white man has ever traversed this desert from south to north; from east to west, however, this has been accomplished, when the sufferings overcome by the adventurers are all but unparalleled in the annals of historical travel.

I could not help frequently glancing towards the west, and thinking how, if I could follow that setting sun, what chance there might be of my enjoying a good comfortable meal and bottle of wine on board one of the "Union" or "Donald Currie" ships.

These open grass veldts, without any object to attract the attention, are most tedious, and with the tedium even the most light-hearted man will be apt to become sad and melancholy.

A great change has come over the atmosphere within the last hour, the breeze now having died away completely, and all the air is one dead still calm. There was something, too, which caused me to believe that there was an excess of electricity brooding over the plain. Black clouds began to rise to the southward, large and ponderous—so massive-looking indeed as to make one wonder why, by the natural law of gravity, such weighty substances should not fall to earth.

"Here! Tottie!" I called out; "we are going to have rain to-night?"

"No, Baas," was his answer; "it never rain in this country." (A nice description for a native to give you of his land!)

"O my master!" ejaculated he; "look at the spring-bok!"

Sure enough there was an immense troop of them, watching us with that expression of wonder in their large eyes so peculiar to this family.

They did not seem to consider our approach as a matter of any importance, for already we were within two hundred yards, and as yet they gave no intimation of an intention to move off.

I was little in the humour for shooting, so I bade him take the rifle; when, just as he was about to press the trigger, a *wildebeast* sprang up out of the long grass between him and the object at which he aimed.

Naturally he desired to have the larger game, so he fired a running shot at it; and not with any feelings of sorrow I saw him miss like a man, for the reason that there was sufficient meat in the cart to last us for a day or two, and every hour we were getting into a locality where bok becomes more abundant.

An hour before sunset we came across a very large flock of guinea-fowl; I imagine there must have been some hundreds of them. They were remarkably tame, and ran along the track about

twenty yards in front of me. The presence of these birds is usually accepted as an indication that water is near. They are marvellously swift on foot, and most persistently refuse to take wing, unless they are compelled to have recourse to it as a *dernier ressort*.

The sand continues dreadfully heavy. None of us have ridden, still the horses' flanks heave with as great violence as if they had run a three-mile race, and I am in little better plight. My attendants, however, do not suffer; in fact, they appear almost as fresh as they did at the hour of starting.

Darkness now descends—at first gradually, afterwards more rapidly—over the landscape, and an air of mystery seems to pervade all your eyes cannot distinctly discern. This produces a strange, weird sensation, such as one might feel on leaving the world we know, and entering that we are unacquainted with.

There are few objects, excepting an occasional acacia-tree, to cast shadows; but those that they produce are frequently startling, at other times ludicrous.

These leave upon your mind much the same kind of sensation that is conveyed by many of the absurdities etched by Gustave Doré.

"Look here, Tottie! where is that water?" I called out.

"Soon, Baas; down there," he replied, pointing. Therefore onwards I trudged, the night now

having become sufficiently dark to prevent anything being observed except the sand, which was exposed in a continuous line by the wheels of the few waggons that had cut it out.

I could not help observing that the horses were becoming excessively nervous, more especially Bobby. Several times I had to speak to them, and whenever I did so they appeared reassured. At length both jumped violently to the left, and it was with difficulty I could restrain them from rushing out over the veldt. The boys also kept close to me, in fact so much so as to embarrass my movements.

“What the devil does all this mean? Where is the water, driver?”

“Down there, master; there, you see!”

“Well, go and find it, and shout for me when you are at it,” I said very peremptorily.

“My master! don’t you think other boy had better go?” he now spoke inquiringly.

“No, you rascal! begone!” said I, my anger beginning to arise; “off with you!”

But still he stirred not, while the other seemed to cling to me in abject terror.

At length the Hottentot said, “I do not think, master, the water is here.”

“Find a good camping-place, and we will unharness.” Scarcely had the words left my mouth, when the horses made the most strenuous efforts to break away, and it was only by sheer physical strength that I prevented them.

"What the deuce makes the horses so restive?" I asked.

"It's only the wolves, master."

"Let us get to a camping-place! Come, look sharp, lads; there is no time to be lost!"

By this time the face of the heavens had become completely changed. Dark clouds, black as ink, scudded across the sky, and occasional flashes of lightning darted from the zenith down to the southward. The wind, which had been still heretofore, commenced to moan, and sounded like surf breaking upon a shingle beach.

I felt we were in for what the sailors call a dirty night; but as these things will happen, all that could be done was to make the best of it. What are such occurrences in life? No more than the bitter that must be taken with the sweet!

In a quarter of an hour afterwards, with no small amount of trouble, we found a tree and a bush, growing out of an ant heap, with a considerable quantity of broken sticks in the immediate vicinity. This was fortunate, for the horses were again becoming restive. So we halted, and in ten minutes afterwards had two substantial, bright fires burning—one to the north of the cart, the other to the south of the tree and bush—between both of which the horses were made fast. Although I was very weary—more, almost worn out, I enjoyed our meal; and the boy seemed to have recovered from his dejection, for without

invitation he commenced relating about the 240 elephants, which the Baas thought was far beneath a just amount, but that 300 ought to be substituted—when I retired. It is useless to wait for these fellows to finish spinning yarns when once they begin, especially if their appetites are satisfied, and they have an audience. In fact they will continue till—well, I do not know, for I never tried them !

So I rolled myself in the blankets, put my saddle under my head, and lay down in full confidence of having a refreshing sleep. I dozed off immediately, and soon would have been in dream-land, when I thought some irritation of my skin required scratching. There are so few luxuries to be enjoyed here that I could not deny myself so trivial a pleasure.

The result was gratifying in the extreme, so I turned upon the other side, said a mental little prayer in thanks for the rest I anticipated, and closed my eyes again.

There was evidently some hitch in the arrangements, for in a few minutes I discovered that I felt very irritated in another limb. It was desirable to scratch it also. I did so with kind and gentle energy ; then reversed the side I was reclining on, and again sought slumber, to invoke which the better I shut my eyes. However, not one place wanted scratching now—four, five, a dozen did ! I will resist, thought I ; it is imaginary ; but the longer I resisted the worse I got, until I

began to think I had an attack, or at least the premonitory symptoms, of some of those ailments babies are subject to !

In five minutes more it was not what babies, but what full-grown men occasionally suffer from ! Stand it any longer I could not, so I sprang from my resting-place and rushed to the fire. Carefully I examined myself, and so numerous were those convivial, playful little creatures, the ants, that I was absolutely covered with them.

CHAPTER XXX.

HYÆNAS.

WHAT an admirable subject for an artist, one who excelled in lights and shadows !

A white man being rapidly divested of his clothing, with two black men assisting him to get rid of countless ants—all intent upon a meal from his luckless corporation ; and this on one of the darkest of nights, the scene lit up by the glimmer of a struggling fire, which darkened the more the blackness of the surrounding country.

This was not employment for a few minutes ; it must have taken upwards of half an hour, and the way the little devils held on to their prey was worthy of a better cause.

Afterwards my wounds had to be carefully smeared with a piece of fat—a process far from agreeable, and one calculated to make me unpleasantly redolent.

Fresh fuel having been added to the fire, I this time lay down under the cart, and at once was comfortably asleep. Possibly this lasted for half an hour, but at any rate for no longer, when

rain began to descend in such enormous drops as are only to be witnessed in the tropics.

This gentle warning soon gave way to a regular and systematic downpour; and with it the violence of the wind increased, for it fairly shrieked and howled over the plain with an impetuosity that would make a listener believe it was positively actuated by a spirit of revenge and destruction. Occasionally it would lull away, when strange, unearthly moans would assail the ear, causing the impression to an imaginative mind that spirits from another world were contemplating with terror the war of the elements.

My position under the cart was untenable, so I got inside it and pulled the tilt up. Even there I was not safe from the penetrating power of the rain, for it beat with such violence against it as to make its weather-side a perfect spring of water. Though rolled up in a couple of blankets, I was soon as saturated as a sponge, and so chilly withal that my teeth actually chattered.

The storm was at its height when the horses began to struggle, and rushed to and fro in a most disconcerted manner. It became at once obvious that if the reims did not break they would throw themselves down, and cause each other serious injury. I shouted to them, and both boys were rushing to the spot, when a heavier plunge than any of the previous ones tore them loose, and off they darted across the veldt as fast as their legs could carry them.

In an instant they were out of sight, and all we could learn of the direction in which they had gone was the fast dying out thud, thud, thud, of their galloping hoofs.

This was not a time for inaction.

Divesting myself of the blankets, and springing to the ground, I ordered my boys to follow, and made after the retreating quadrupeds.

It was impossible to see the obstacles lying in my way, so ere I had gone a hundred yards I stumbled over a bush, and received a fearful fall, causing me to think at the moment that I had broken one of my arms.

However, I had no time for thought; rapidity of movement was essential, as already it was with difficulty that I could hear the guiding sounds; but here the native's instinct came in.

The Hottentot went in front of me, and I followed him at my best pace; but so intensely dark was the night, that though I was well aware he was close to me, it was with strained eyesight that I got an occasional glimpse of him.

But the little fellow was equal to the difficulty, and bravely pushed on, momentarily calling on the frightened animals to stop.

In ten minutes we must have progressed more than a mile, and it was a regular case of "bellows to mend" with me, for I was so thoroughly pumped as to make me convinced that I must soon halt, so in broken sentences I called after my leader, that if I stopped he was to continue the pursuit.

In truth, I was in an awkward position ; for if he left me I doubted my capability to find my way back to the cart, for the other lad had long disappeared, goodness knew where ! And to spend the night sitting out on the plain, with a blinding torrent of rain beating down upon me for five or six hours, was anything but a pleasant arrangement for contemplation.

Every step I took appeared as if it must be my last. I staggered to and fro like a drunken man, and my breath came and went in spasmodic gasps, when I heard, with unparalleled delight, the voice of my driver calling out, " Whoa, Tommy ! whoa, old man ! Whoa, Bobby, whoa ! What are you about, you rogues ? Whoa ! "

Immediately afterwards he sung out to me that he had caught one of the truants.

I knew that all was right now, for the animals had become so much attached to one another that where one went the other would follow.

When I had reached my lad, I found that Tommy was a captive ; and I had scarcely placed my hand upon the halter, when Bob walked up out of the darkness, and placed his head over his comrade's shoulder, and in an instant was secured.

The return journey was not easy. The fire, at best a feeble one, had been all but extinguished by the heavy downpour of water, and there was no star visible by which we could direct our course. The storm had blown from the southward ; the

runaways had, on breaking loose, appeared to go down wind; so the only possible chance I could see of regaining the cart was to advance with the wind and rain in my face.

Giving the Tottie a leg-up, I put him on Bob's back, that horse being light in colour, and therefore more easily seen than the other, and told him to go in advance, while I followed on Tommy.

It was no easy task to make the animals face the driving rain, but we persevered for upwards of twenty minutes. Then the Hottentot shouted, with a hope that Gopani's boy would hear him; but no sound came in response to our call, except the wailing, idiotic howl of the hyæna.

"My master," said the boy, "that's the scoundrel that gave us all this trouble;" and I mentally cursed the brute.

It was scarcely a matter of suspicion in my mind, but had almost become a certainty, that we should be unable to find the cart; in fact, already I had resolved to dismount, and tie the horses together to prevent their again straying, when the driver turned sharply off to the left, somewhat increased the pace, and in about five minutes I had the pleasure of viewing the almost extinguished fire.

On reaching the cart, no vestige of the other lad could be seen. Again and again I called to him; still I received no answer.

Having tied the horses up, I thought I would

once more dispose myself in the old position in the conveyance, when to my surprise I found the lost boy—huddled up in my blankets and in a state of such abject terror as to be incapable of speech, let alone locomotion. Without much ceremony I hauled him out, the poor wretch not resisting; but so demoralized had his system become through fear, that when we reached the ground he could hardly stand. A little bullying acted wonderfully as a restorative, for in a few minutes he was able to go about and assist in making up the fires.

Fortunately now the rain began to moderate, and the wind to lose much of its previous force, so that in a short time, the comforting blaze leapt aloft again, and gave us warmth and light.

Deeming the night pretty far advanced, I resolved not to turn in, but to make myself as comfortable as possible beside the fire.

"Driver, where is the rifle?" said I.

"In the cart, Baas!"

"Do you think it is dry?"

"I think not. What could keep dry such a night as this?"

"Well! fetch it here;" and he brought it to me.

In case the cartridge had got wet I removed it, replacing the old one with another from my pocket.

Then putting the flap of my coat over the lock, and laying it across my knees, I sat impatiently waiting for dawn.

Talk about storm-tossed sailors anxiously looking for daybreak. No one looked forward more to its advent with greater longing than did I that night.

The hours seemed to be interminable, and it truly appeared as if they would never come to an end.

In the midst of our discomfort, however, there was one thing gratifying, viz., that the rain and wind had almost entirely ceased, and the black clouds which previously shut out the face of heaven rapidly began to break, and drift away to leeward. But all was dark, wet, and uncomfortable. Place myself in what position I chose, my hands would come in contact with the soaking blanket which I had wrapped around me. But the fire seemed to throw out more warmth, and the result was apparent in the steam which ascended from the sodden covering.

Dawn was now at hand was evident, for that grey cold light which so mysteriously ushers in the day was creeping over the plain, and, as the advance guard of the royal sun, was pressing from his course the darkness that had lately held paramount sway.

I was beginning to congratulate myself, when there was a second disturbance amongst the horses.

This time, however, they were more firmly secured; and the lesson we had learned a few hours before had not by any means been thrown

away, for the boys at once sprang to their heads, while I stood in their rear and spoke to them.

It is wonderful how a man's voice will soothe and reassure a frightened horse.

In a few seconds they had apparently overcome their terror.

"Baas! look at the wolf!" and to windward of us stood one of these gentry, about twenty-five yards off, his eyes and ears denoting the interest he took in the scene before him.

He was by no means a monster, but a member of that species which is universally considered the pluckiest of the genus.

I had my rifle in my hand. In a moment it was at my shoulder. I levelled low, for the distance was short, and with the report the night-prowler sprung into the air, turned round as if to bite his flank, and in an instant afterwards fell on his side, his head doubled under him, —dead.



A Night Prowler's End.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LIONS.

It is not often that the sun rises upon so disconsolate a group as our party presented that morning. The Hottentot driver looked—and was—the dirtiest of the dirty. The rain and wind had brought upon myself a severe attack of fever, and Gopani's relative was doubled up with pains in his stomach, and was shivering and incessantly chattering his teeth.

I comprehended at once that to keep him longer with me would be to risk his life, so I resolved to send him back upon the very first opportunity.

After a sorry meal of bok, burnt as dry as dust, and a couple of hours for the horses to graze, we started.

Although during the night the rain had descended in such vast quantities, not a drop of water could we find, for the parched and thirsty soil had drunk it all up. Tottie was right enough when he remarked, "There is no rain in this country."

This was the first shower that had fallen during a space of two or three years.

The English reader may imagine that at least there were puddles to be found.

Well, the three of us sought in all directions for such a thing, but never a one could we find.

However, the storm was not without its benefit, for it had cleared the atmosphere, and left a most invigorating and delightful crispness in the air.

Immediately after the start was made, I catechised the driver as to where water was to be found.

At first he promised we should obtain it in one hollow, afterwards in another, and ultimately declared he did not know when we should come across it.

Of course I abused him roundly, not so much for his ignorance, but for the deceitfulness which prompted him to a pretence of knowledge; but my tirade ended in our holding a council of war upon what might be the best move to make under such exceptionally trying circumstances.

In the far hazy distance stood a large koppie, to which the Hottentot drew my attention. He said,—

"Baas, that is Horroch's; when I have been hunting hartebeest I got water out of a pit that is on the further side of it. There is a Kaffir cattle-station close by, and we shall be sure to find

some person who will show us water, if that spring should be dry."

Although it was a long *détour* from my course, yet the sufferings of my horses, which were already severe, determined me, without consideration, to accept the proffered advice.

It is very seldom that a person has to encounter so trying and painful a drive, for after leaving the waggon trail we had to strike across the veldt, which was in every direction intersected by earth-cracks, many of them being so formidable that nothing but a Cape cart could possibly have succeeded in gaining their opposite side.

Game also was exceedingly abundant, and flights of Namaqua partridges and doves kept constantly passing and repassing—a reliable indication of the immediate presence of water.

After difficulties which it would be impossible to enumerate singly, and about four hours of the severest toil, we arrived at the cattle kraal, and learned, to our intense dismay, that the spring of which the boy had spoken had long failed to supply its precious liquid.

However, here was a Buschman and a few head of miserable oxen. It was perfectly obvious that they could not subsist without drinking; but like all the natives in this part of the land, they strenuously denied the existence of water in the neighbourhood.

The Hottentot, however, refused to be deceived, being too apt himself at deceit; and being in-

timately acquainted with the guile and trickery of the people, he whispered to me,—

"Baas, there *is* water here, but I will have to talk to that old man for some time before he will tell me where it is to be found. Give me a piece of tobacco for him."

So the two worthies sat down and had a long and tedious pow-wow. The delay was so irksome that I almost lost my patience; but the result was finally satisfactory, for the old fellow got up, placed his greasy, slimy carosse round his shoulders, and stalked off in front of us with the air of a king.

In half an hour we reached three or four pits; by one was a trough, evidently used for the cattle to drink out of, the ground all about it having been much trampled under foot, while in the hole from which the liquid was taken there floated a considerable-sized gourd, cut into the shape of a ladle.

It took at least twenty minutes to fill the trough. What space of time therefore must it have occupied for these Buschmen to have watered fifty head of stock?

The surrounding country was most uninviting. There was scarcely a vestige of vegetation to be seen anywhere, whilst the rocks on the side of the koppie looked grey and weather-beaten. Moreover, there was a hungry look all over the scene, that denoted, as plainly as words could say, "Here reigns poverty supreme."

One thing which struck me as very extraordinary, was the remarkable tameness of the birds. In spite of our presence they dashed down into the water when we were only a few feet from it, showing no fear of man, but only the insurmountable mastery of thirst over all other instincts.

We had not been here long when we were joined by a family of Buschmen, than whom nothing could be more abject and wretched in appearance. They were positively encrusted with filth, and their limbs looked as if they possessed no particle of flesh to cover them, while their abdomens protruded to such an extent as to be disgusting. Want of water had doubtless brought them, but I imagine food was equally necessary; for having no fire-arms, it is only now and then that game falls into their hands—offal, carrion of any description, even when in a putrid condition, being their usual sustenance.

One tiny child, the most repulsive-looking infant I have ever seen, appeared to take a fancy to me—a most unusual occurrence, for invariably black children are frightened by the mere presence of a white man. In this case the little waif was above the weaknesses of his race, for all I could do would not keep him from fingering my garments, and keeping unpleasantly close to my boots.

Possibly from a feeling of humanity, decidedly actuated with a desire of getting rid of so unpleasant an attachment, I made the boy bring

from the cart what remained of our spring-bok, and hand it to these miserable wanderers. I cannot describe the wonderful change in the expression of their countenances which now took place. The abject terror which previously had been apparent in the man and women gave place to the most demoniac joy, in anticipation of the food which lay before them. The head of the family, without an instant's delay, began cutting up the flesh with his assegai, every few seconds placing a piece of the raw meat in his mouth, and chewing it with the greatest relish. The women would have gone and done likewise with pleasure, but fearing to intrude upon the privileges of their lord and master, sat tacitly by, watching with keen eyes the demolition of each precious morsel. Presently a fire was lit, and the remainder of the bok was placed upon the glowing embers, while the whole party cowered round it, as if to prevent the slightest particle of heat, or a breath of the cooking meat from escaping. Having some curiosity to see the other water-pit, which was close by, I directed my steps towards it. Although the flow was not so great as in the former, yet it was nearer to the surface of the surrounding ground.

There were cattle and game spoors all around it; and while examining these I came suddenly to a dead stop, and exclaimed mentally, "By Jove! I know *that* sign, and it is as fresh as a daisy. *Lions !!!*"

Fifteen months in the lion veldt had not been gone through by me for nothing. I knew the track of the king of beasts as well as an English farmer knows that of a shod horse or a bullock.

After taking a thorough survey, to make sure that one of the royal family was no longer in the immediate neighbourhood, I stooped down to examine the spoor.

It was so fresh that the sand had not fallen in over the markings made by the tip of the claws; thus I concluded that the brute had drunk there no later than break of day.

If I had had time, which I had not, and a double-barrelled gun, with the aid of the Buschmen at the fire I would certainly not have gone to rest that night without getting this gentleman's "pelt;" for know, O reader, that this race of men are the best trackers of any in the country.

I called my boy and pointed out the spoor to him, when he immediately endorsed my opinion—in fact went further, asserting that it had been made since sunrise, for else it would have been obliterated by the prints of the bok's feet, these animals invariably coming to drink immediately after dawn; but, added he, in a half-supplicating tone—

"My master, you must not go to hunt him with only one gun. For if you do not kill him at the first shot, I shall be unable to help you; and what will my chief say when I go back alone and tell him you are dead?"

When we returned to the Busch people I told him to inform them of what we had seen.

"Tauw," said they, "there are five of them in that grass," pointing to some high reeds lying about half a mile distant.

The old fellow continued, "There were seven when they came from the Limpopo, but the two old ones took to bad habits, and began killing cattle, so Hashesheba's people came down and shot them. The others are good lions, and only kill bok, so I love them, for they often supply me with a feed. When I see the *asphoes*, I know that there is plenty meat, and I and my wives go to the place, and wait till he has eaten enough, and when he leaves it we get the rest."

It was rather tempting to have five lions so very near, and disappointing to be unable to give them a call, particularly as these were such well-disposed beasts; but haste being imperative, and that, coupled with the fact of my possession of nothing but a single-barrelled rifle, were the incentives which caused me reluctantly to order the horses to be immediately put into harness, and to turn their heads away in the direction of the waggon track we had left in the morning on our search for water.

It is quite possible that the supposed hyænas which frightened my horses last night were nothing more nor less than one of these lions which crossed their wind, and thus the reason for the extreme violence with which they broke loose and dashed across the veldt.

An anecdote with reference to the fear of horses for the king of beasts, although irrelevant to the object of my journey, may not be uninteresting.

Among several lions' skins brought home by me a few years ago there was one of a lioness, only partially cured.

I drove with a friend of mine to Tynehead Station on my way up to Edinburgh. When my friend got out of the carriage to procure the tickets; he sent his servant down to the platform with the luggage, at the same time asking me to stand by the horse.

On my arm was the semi-tanned hide. When I approached its head it became exceedingly restive, and ultimately breaking from my control, dashed away, being with the greatest difficulty recaptured; and when brought back it was a mass of foam, and trembling in every limb. Scotch horses have never seen a lion, but their natural instinct tells them that the effluvium rising from the pelt of this animal indicates that a terrible and dreaded foe is in their immediate vicinity.

It is now noon. The whole of us trudge manfully along, Tottie acting as the leader. The tramp is not a little fatiguing, as the sand is exceedingly heavy, and the dwarf brush, in many parts, is matted and tangled into an impassable barrier. I see plenty of game, especially hartebeasts; but as I must hurry on I do not molest them.

Our course is north-west, as the trail that we have been previously travelling runs from north

to south, so we cut off a large angle; but I doubt whether we save time by so doing.

My opinion of the Boers is that they are a very stupid lot, but they certainly have shown wonderful acumen in the tracks they have selected for their waggon routes. An African traveller who is inexperienced in the country, should make it a rule never to leave a road to make a short cut, or he will infallibly find himself in trouble. The path I have journeyed over may have been traversed by European traders, but unquestionably it is to the Boers that it owes its existence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MORE TROUBLES.

AFTER the rain of last night I thought I had just grounds for coming to the conclusion that we might hope for a cessation of the disagreeable circumstances it entailed; but in this I was doomed to disappointment, for about three o'clock the rain began to descend in one of those drizzly showers so frequent in Scotland as to have gained the name of Scotch mists. On the moors, when shooting in the land of the Gael, I did not object to them, but here on the confines of the tropics it is a different and far more serious affair.

About three hours after leaving the desolate tract of country that surrounds Horroch we again entered into a landscape where trees once more predominated, and the further we advanced to the northward the more attractive did the scenery become. One valley in particular into which we descended was as green as the savannahs of Georgia. It must have covered an area of many thousand acres, and doubtless possessed water, had we only known where to seek it. The sides of its

acclivities were densely covered with bush, and here and there jagged rocks projected, looking as if some Titanic power had transported them here from the sea boundaries of the continent. All that was needed was sunlight and brightness to have made the view thoroughly enjoyable; but when it was closed in with a mist like a grey pall, it prevented the extending of your sight beyond the closer surroundings.

Here game was exceedingly abundant, and the driver was very anxious to be allowed to shoot; but expedition was the order of the day, for I had indulged a hope of reaching Kania that evening. Truly blessed is he that expecteth little!

By five o'clock the rain was coming down in torrents, and so slippery had the soil become that the horses could scarcely keep their footing, the sand of the previous part of my journey being now replaced by a stiff clay.

We were obliged to outspan, and pass another night exposed to all the violence of a tropical drench. It is useless to repeat the miseries of that time; they were quite equal to those of the preceding night, with two exceptions, viz. that we got shelter under a clump of trees, and that the horses did not become restive.

Gopani's lad gave me great cause for uneasiness. Poor wretch! he was completely doubled up with pain, and I had nothing in the shape of medicine except quinine, which I did not consider it advisable to give him. At last a thought

struck me. I heated a large flat stone in the fire, and, wrapping it in one of the horse's blankets, placed it against his stomach ; and the result was surprising, for in a minute or two he had obtained such relief from his agony that he thanked me several times over in his native Bechuana, one of the most melodious of languages, almost equal to the Italian of a "Tuscan spoken from a Roman tongue."

Our distance from Kania could not possibly exceed twenty miles. However, we could not see it at sunrise, the koppies to the north of us being very numerous and high.

In consequence of the shortness of the journey ahead, comparatively speaking, we delayed starting until noon, for the double purpose of drying some of our things and giving the horses a good feed before they had again to undertake a further spell of work.

When night commenced we were still on the road, and rain had again begun falling.

My poor animals had a dreadful time of it, and looked like the proverbial "fence rails."

At length Bob refused to go any further, and, when punished, deliberately lay down.

To remedy this he was taken out of harness, received a good whipping, and was put back in the trap. All was of no avail. He persistently refused to draw. Having made a fire I took a lighted brand from it, and upon examination of the horses I discovered, to my surprise, and, need

I add, horror, that both of them had their shoulders galled severely by the breast strap, these sores being produced by the wet. From my knowledge of distance I was pretty well convinced that Kania could not be far away, and the driver was of the same opinion, so Tommy was taken out of harness, and a saddle was put upon his back, for I determined to ride on until I reached that station.

Leaving instructions with Gopani's boy to take care of Bob during the night, and giving him permission to sleep in the cart, with the Hottentot for guide I renewed my journey.

I cannot tell what sort of scenes I went through. I can distinctly remember wandering over a plain for at least a couple of hours, and I also recollect the boy endeavouring to point out some lights and telling me that they were in Kania, but, whether or no, we failed to reach them.

On one occasion Tommy fell into a hole, and but for his docility must have done me a serious injury. Of this, however, I am certain, that about half-past ten we suddenly, and most unexpectedly so far as I was concerned, came upon a long, low house.

A shout immediately brought out the owner of the habitation.

Thank God ! it was Mr. Good, the missionary of Kania.

When the family learnt that an Englishman was at their door, and in such sore distress, the dear, kind wife immediately left her room, re-made

the kitchen fire, and provided me with food, not the least enjoyable article of which, was a big cup of hot tea.

Dirty, was not a word for my appearance! I was simply filthy, my face begrimed with sweat and smoke, and my clothes as saturated as if they had been dragged through a pond. I was the first arrival from the outer world for more than three weeks, and I therefore had much to tell of which they were still ignorant, so it was very late indeed before we adjourned to our respective sleeping-places.

Tired as I was I could not sleep, but tossed from side to side on the comfortable couch until after daybreak. At length, disgusted with Somnus for refusing to solace me, I went out to see Tommy.

Poor beast! he had not fared well, as there was no stable for him, and it made my heart ache to behold how wretched he looked.

Nevertheless, he had had a good feed of mealies, and I don't doubt that his stomach being *pro tempore* replenished, he felt his hardship to be considerably lessened.

After a good deal of argument, and some taxing of my temper, I was enabled to make a bargain with a man to go and bring my cart to Kania.

At midday he returned, and with great satisfaction I found all my belongings safe and sound.

Meanwhile the chief had been communicated

with, and he expressed a wish to receive me the next day, which of course necessitated the loss of another twenty-four hours.

But I could not have availed myself of the time, for my animals are so thoroughly worn out that it would be impossible to renew the journey without further delay, thus I do not so much deplore it.

My host is all kindness ; seldom have I met a more earnestly sincere man, and one at the same time so entirely free from any trace of sectarianism. His spouse is exactly such a woman as a missionary should have for a wife—energetic, industrious, cheerful, and untiring in the execution of her work. They have a large family, and it must take no ordinary amount of labour to furnish each of the little ones with clothes ; yet all are made by the handiwork of their fond mother, for there are no convenient shops or stores here to which a person can rush upon the shortest notice, and rig a youngster out, as the sailors express it, "*from stem to stern.*"

A dreadful calamity happened a year ago to this family. The two eldest children, sons, then about sixteen years of age, were returning from school in the old colony ; when on the margin of the Orange river, they were induced by their Kaffir driver to go into the stream for a bathe.

The trio entered the water, holding each other's hands. After advancing a few paces, they suddenly found themselves out of their depths, and all of them were drowned.

With Christian resignation the parents bore this dreadful affliction, yet when they spoke of it, it was easy to see what a trial it had been to them.

I had heard of the disaster when at Linikani, and of course should never have alluded to it, but that Mr. Good mentioned the matter.

From the rough life I have been leading, sleeping in a house appeared to affect my respiration; so the worthy missionary had his waggon brought in front of the porch, swung a cartle in it, and made my bed there. That night I slept like a top.

Hashesheba, the chief of Kania, is a fine old fellow, possibly just a little nervous in his manner, and I am told possesses a great dread of war. His people he loves like his own children, and could not bear that any of them should be killed.

The surrounding chiefs being aware of this, I think are somewhat inclined to come the bully over him, although his tribe is probably the most numerous and powerful within a radius of 200 miles. He has also proved himself to be a great friend of Great Britain; for, when several of the rebels that had committed murder and pillage in Griqualand West sought shelter in his country, he informed Mr. Bethel of their whereabouts, and gave most valuable assistance in capturing them.

Sycheley, a chief living about two days' journey to the north, sent a message to him in consequence, to this^o purport that if he did so

again he would declare war against him, burn down his station, and carry off his cattle.

This Sycheley is a perfect bugbear in this neighbourhood. He once professed great friendship for the British, but now that he has heard news of the Isanwala disaster, and the powerful opposition which our arms were receiving in Zululand, the old rogue has turned his coat.

When I visited him, four years ago, his professions of friendship for the English were fulsome in the extreme; now, if I am correctly informed, I shall travel to his station with considerable danger to myself. He has heard, through what means I cannot say, of my arrival in the country; and from Hashesheba I hear that the crafty fox has sent definite instructions to him not to receive me, and threatens him with war should he give me any people.

Some years ago Sycheley started to visit her Majesty the Queen, to lay before her his grievances against the Boers, who had kidnapped many of his people and two of his children, whom they carried off into slavery in the Magalesburgh district. He got as far as Cape Town, where his funds failed. The officers of the garrison regiment showed him every attention, treating him as a distinguished guest. However, he got no further, and still harps upon the illiberality of the British Government in not providing him with a passage to London.

I paid a visit to Hashesheba on the appointed

day. His son, a well-grown lad of about twenty, was with him. Although both prefer to live in a Kaffir hut, still they possess good substantial houses, in one of which our interview took place.

From the chief's manner it was easy to see he wished to assist me; but he added, in his mild, quiet way,—

“If I send my people to Natal, I will have no person to defend my kraal should any of my enemies attack us; but I will think the matter over, and let you know in two or three days.”

I imagine these Kaffirs are rich, for all appeared to have money, and many, I was told, owned very large herds of cattle.

The next morning all the headmen of the tribe were assembled, to present their chief with the first ripe ear of corn, that being the universal custom before the crop is gathered.

Every one of them was on horseback, and many of their ponies were splendid little animals.

So soon as the chief had eaten some of the grain, with a wild shout they all dashed away over the plain, each endeavouring to outpace his rival. The natives are, without exception, the ugliest horsemen it is possible to imagine, yet they manage, in the most fearless manner, to retain their seat over the roughest ground.

On the third day I again visited Hashesheba, and with deep regret found that I was once more to be disappointed. If it was possible to soften my sorrow, the old king certainly did his best

to do so, one of his excuses being that he had upwards of six hundred of his men at work on the diamond fields. I learnt that more of Sycheley's emissaries had been to him ; and I also received a gentle hint, to the effect that some of his people will probably try to stop me on the road, by turning me into an animated target.

Should this be attempted, and a failure ensue, I pity any of them who come within shooting distance of my revolver.

Before I left this station, as a token of friendship and to provide me with food for the way, the chief sent me a sheep ; but as a baksheesh is necessary for the bearer, it does not come as a cheap commodity.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A HOSTILE CHIEF.

'Twas a lovely day the morning I left Kania. The situation of this station is, without exception, one of the prettiest I have seen in South Africa. A range of hills, about a thousand feet high, with a saucer-like indentation in the centre of them, is the characteristic feature of the place.

It is provided with several springs, so the greatest necessary to existence is supplied in abundance. As there are only four entrances to this table-land, and they but narrow ones with somewhat precipitous sides, very little labour would be required to make it a most powerful position.

On rounding the southern termination of the ridge my course becomes due north, through a charming country densely covered with fine large timber, whilst the cultivation extends for several miles, now smiling with heavy crops of mealies. The harvest this year has been an exceptionally good one—a fortunate circumstance; for, twelve months previously, the people were all but reduced to starvation.

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The rocks here—a species of red sandstone—are piled up in the most extraordinary manner in some places; and, but for their size, the observer would be disposed to believe them to have been arranged by human agency.

Mr. Good had descanted with considerable warmth upon the beauty of the country I was about to traverse; but his glowing description fell far short of its reality. In fact, I doubt whether in all my life I have ever seen an extent of more exquisite landscape than that lying between Kania and Pilan.

I note the fresh spoor of two waggons, which must have passed during the night. With them are two white men, as I know from their shoe-marks. I wonder who the strangers are?

My curiosity is rather excited by the fact that they appear to have at least half a dozen horses with them.

In the afternoon I overtook them. One was an old acquaintance from Colesberg, the other a retired naval officer; the former trading, the latter enjoying himself with hunting.

I rested for an hour in their society, where I had lunch, washed down with some of Bass's bitter beer—a luxury not often enjoyed in this distant part of the world.

Renewing my journey, I reached the kraal of the chief of Pilan about four o'clock, and was not at all prepossessed in his favour, his countenance

being unusually forbidding, whilst in his manner he was rude and uncourteous.

After I had acquainted him with my business, he satirically asked me, "Why did I not remain to fight the Zulus?" adding afterwards, "Because you are afraid of their assegais, I suppose?" Then he inquired abruptly, "How dare you come into my country upon such an errand?"

Some of his followers here chimed in with the advice that perhaps it would be better to kill me then and there.

My Hottentot turned as white as his complexion would permit, and begged me at once to go away. This however I would not do in so sudden a manner, but retained my seat amongst the hostile crew, to whom I explained that it was an easy thing for them to take my life; but, I added, "You will have to pay a heavy price for the privilege. At Kania they know I have come here; and if anything happens to me before I leave your country, my Government will be revenged."

This disagreeable fellow then proposed to accompany me a few miles to show me my road; but, being suspicious of no kindly intention, I took good care to keep a revolver free for immediate use.

However, we parted without the actual occurrence of any *contretemps*, mutually professing good wishes for each other's safety, which at heart neither of us felt.

Not feeling quite safe in such a neighbourhood

of blustering blackguards, I pushed on, scarcely pulling a rein until eight or ten miles had been traversed, when I met a Boer who had been driven out of the interior, and with him I spent the night. This unfortunate had numerous and grave complaints to make as to his treatment in Matabeleland, and was firmly impressed with the belief that Leubenguelo had premeditatedly planned the murder of Captain Patterson and Mr. Sergeant, who had been sent up to him on a diplomatic mission. I sincerely hope that the day will come when the Matabele king will be made to answer for that dastardly outrage on our race.

Resuming my journey, I reached Sycheley's at nightfall, the country I passed on my way being well-wooded, except in the vicinity of the station, where the timber had been cleared off to admit of the growth of mealies.

That night I slept in the vacant house of a missionary, at present on his way up from the coast, he having been absent in England on leave.

This station was once a remarkably pretty place, but neglect has sent it sadly to rack and ruin. The garden, which some time ago was well kept and prolific, was now a tangle of weeds and briars, and the fruit-trees, from want of pruning and attention, have become completely wild.

As has often been the case in many parts of Africa, the river which flows through an adjoining kloof, and which used to yield an abundance of

water, is at present almost dry. Four years ago I bathed in a pool which must have been nine or ten feet deep; now the water had disappeared from it entirely, and nothing remains but a hard sun-baked mud bed. This spot, in days gone by, was a very favourite haunt of mine; for the overhanging cliffs sheltered me from the noonday sun, while the locality was a great place of resort for baboons, whose tricks and antics afforded me no end of amusement.

I have a great weakness for this animal; it has so much intelligence, and in many respects is so great a caricature of humanity in its ways. The affection for the young on the part of the parents is remarkably touching; nevertheless, if the juveniles do not behave themselves, they get well whacked for their misconduct.

One aged male, who was grizzly with years, was sufficiently tame to allow of my approaching within twenty-five or thirty paces of him. He seemed to be the butt for roguery amongst the younger members of the community. However, he was quite equal to the occasion, and would often capture one of his tormentors, to whom he would apply the *argumentum ad hominem* in the same manner as a Christian grandfather will "slipper" his grandchildren now and again. When such a thing occurred, the mamma would instantly rush to the rescue, and abuse the antiquated ancestor with all the vehemence that her (to me) unintelligible language could command.

There is no animal so watchful as a baboon, not even excepting that excellent guard the dog, snakes and leopards being held in especial detestation by them ; and when one of these enemies is discovered a note of warning is sounded, to which each individual pays immediate attention.

My Hottentot told me a strange story about the baboons. The truth of it, however, I will not vouch for ; yet I believe he himself is a thorough believer in its veracity. Here it is :—

When the mealies were ripening, the baboons invaded the gardens and committed great depredations upon the crops.

They are wary, having always their sentries placed in commanding positions ; so it is next to an impossibility to get within gunshot of them. If two or three men go into the field together they are off, up the adjoining rocks, in the twinkling of an eyelid.

However, if four men should enter a field, and one drop behind and hide himself, the others walking on and leaving him, the baboons will return in a few minutes, and come within range of the latent rifle. Thus, said my boy, “ *a baboon can count to three, but no further !* ”

Extraordinary stories are told of these animals rolling stones down a steep upon persons who passed below their haunts. That they intend to injure the traveller I do not believe. When searching for insects underneath the rocks, with the united force of several, large stones may be

dislodged, and roll down an incline from their own gravity, however; and this may account for the popular delusion.

In the morning I sent my boy to inform Sycheley of my arrival, and to request that he would appoint as early a time as possible for me to meet him.

On his return my messenger seemed to be in a tremendous fright, having been severely catechised, and some of the younger members of the chief's family expressed such a hatred for the white man, and also against him in person for serving one, that he tried every means in his power to counsel me not to visit the "*Kotla*" (place of assembly).

When he found I was resolved to go there at any price, he broke down entirely, and gave way to tears—a very rare exhibition of feeling on the part of a black man.

Sycheley's reply was this :—

"Tell your master I will see him at ten o'clock by to-morrow's sun. He can come."

In accordance with this permission, I presented myself at the appointed time; and our interview, instead of taking place in the *Kotla*, was held in his house.

He listened more patiently than I expected he would to what I had to say, but declined to give me any answer for a couple of days. Several of the young men occasionally made remarks, exceedingly inimical to my cause and hostile to myself.

During this interview I became perfectly satisfied that nothing could be accomplished here, but I decided not to leave the place without giving him an opportunity to change his mind, or, possibly, be swayed by better advice. His principal councillor is one of his brothers; and to his door I attribute much of the enmity which I experienced. In all state matters he has had his finger in the pie, and invariably, when his advice has been followed, it has led to disaster. He it was that instigated the chief to make war against the Kaminyani, and every action fought proved most inauspicious to their arms. When these hostilities commenced Sycheley was a rich man, comparatively speaking; now he has lost, through reprisals, so many head of cattle that he complains of poverty; and it is easy to see that the world has not wagged well with the old fellow since our last meeting, for he is very much aged, and his hair has considerably whitened.

One of his principal griefs is, I believe, the cowardice of his sons, who, although in command of the army, have on every opportunity exhibited the white feather.

In stature they are like their sire—powerful, tall, heavily-built men; but their hearts are dissimilar. The father's is brave as that of a lion; theirs as fearful as those of mice. Mrs. Sycheley (for when he became converted he put away his other wives) is very obese, and has adopted European costume, with the exception of a red jackal-skin,

which she wears on her head in lieu of cap or bonnet. This is an insignium of royalty here, as well as in most of the adjoining tribes.

On my way down to the building in which I had housed my horses I met a great number of girls carrying water, all of them dressed in an extraordinary costume made out of pieces of reed stitched together. When they have arrived at the age of maturity, for six weeks this costume has to be adopted, and during the period no man may speak to them; nor are they permitted to remove the garb until the expiration of the conventional term, after which they are considered eligible for matrimony.

The "*Bakquena*" are, as a rule, a sturdy and well-made race; but civilization does not appear to have improved their morality.

Formerly several traders used to reside here, but such is no longer the case; wars and rumours of wars among neighbouring tribes, the Zulu campaign, and last, though not least, Sycheley's professed poverty, having driven them, with one exception, into the Colony. This has had a most injurious effect upon the appearance of the station, for the houses which were once opulent trading stores are become a mass of ruins. In my humble belief, I am of opinion that this neighbourhood is rich in minerals. On one part of the road I observed quantities of what looked to me like pure copper. However, for many a year to come there will be one grand drawback to taking ad-

vantage of this country's hidden wealth—viz., transportation, the cost of which would much exceed the value of the load.

On my second interview with Sycheley he did not disguise his animosity against me and our nation. However, he did not condescend to vulgar abuse, but, without mincing matters, spoke at once the sentiments in his mind.

I informed him that I should acquaint our authorities with what he had said; and to this he had no objection, reminding me that he was as independent as Queen Victoria. He further asked me where my credentials were; and, when I produced the authority furnished me by the General in command of the Intelligence Department, he pooh-poohed the matter as a good joke, and observed,—

“ This is addressed to all the Kaffir chiefs! Am I to be put down amongst them? Why, sir, I am an ox, and they are but goats! When next you come here to see me officially, you must bring me a letter from your Queen. One would imagine that my country belonged to the white man, and that he had a right to *commandere* my people.”

Such open hostility was expressed on the countenances and by the gestures of his attendants that I have no hesitation in saying I felt more than pleased when I was safely out of the house; for, if there had been any disturbance, and an assault made upon me, I should have had a better chance of using my weapon effectually.

Before I had bidden adieu, he asked me by what route I was going to travel, and when I intended starting, both of which questions I answered; and, when he heard that I was going to visit the Kaminyani, he at once gave way to temper, for my daring to go to a tribe that had been so lately engaged in hostilities against him.

Gopani's boy, broken down, returns to his home with a waggon which is about to start for the Transvaal, in the employment of the solitary trader whom I have before mentioned. I neglected to say that, on account of the heavy sand, and the galled shoulders of my horses, I was obliged to leave my cart at Kania, to be forwarded here, with oxen attached to it as draught animals, whence it is to be returned to Liniakani on the first available opportunity; therefore I am once more on horseback, and consequently unable to carry anything with me except the blankets I sleep in and my arms and ammunition.

Hard times, I know, are in store for me; but turn back I will not until I have done my utmost to procure people to assist in our transport department, the weakest part in our whole military organization.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WILD DOGS.

WITH pleasure I shook the dust from off my feet as I departed from Sycheley's town ; and there were more reasons than one for this.

First, I had been treated with the greatest want of courtesy, and, I may say, insulted by the chief. Secondly, disease had spread its wings over the place, and numbers of the populace were dying daily.

Unquestionably, famine had much to do with this fearful mortality, and possibly it may only be fair to attribute Sycheley's animosity towards me as the result of sulkiness arising from the sufferings which his people were enduring. I do not wish to be too hard on the old man.

I had known him under other circumstances, when he was kind and hospitable ; yet I ever believed him to be a "fox ;" and, in fact, once I told an adjoining king that I compared Sycheley to Warwick the king-maker, whose peculiar proclivities I explained.

" Ah ! yes," answered my listener, " Warwick just one copy of Sycheley."

This chief has his hand in every person's business, and there is not a king in the country who has not felt his influence. The Matabeles, the Bamanwatos, the Barotses, have all experienced his machinations; and too often, I fear, his power has been the means of overturning a monarch.

That he is hostile to England now there is no doubt, and that he will continue to be so, unless amply subsidised, or a brilliant termination to the present war takes place, will doubtless be the case; but that he would commit himself to overt acts of enmity I very much question, for he is too "pawky" (as they say in Scotch parlance) to be guilty of such a *faux pas*. Moreover, he has an English adviser with him, who appears to possess considerable power as an inimical councillor, whose name it may not be policy to mention here.

The Naval Officer whom I have spoken of as having passed up country, arrived at the station the day before I left, and to him I confided the difficulties which had beset me: he kindly offered to remain behind his waggon, and ride out of the town in my company. Punctually to the time arranged we passed through the kloof by which I had to go *en route* for the north. A crowd of people were assembled on one side. However, they took no steps to prevent my progress, although we both thought a fight was impending. The animus of this crowd was to be clearly understood by the shouting, in terms of derision, as we went on our way; but three revolvers were

ready for work, and I fear I was, from continued disappointment, in such a state of mind as would not have kept me from their swift use had occasion required.

I knew my companion was pluck to the backbone, and would have assisted me to make such a fight as would have taught hostile natives to respect English fire-arms and English prowess. Of course a stray shot might have placed me *hors de combat*; but if I had been so lucky as not to get struck, I am convinced we should have had the best of it.

After passing through several miles of mealie-gardens, we came into a country of wild scrub-bush—just such a place as would be chosen by an enemy to secret himself; but happily no foe appeared, and well I think it was for them that such was the case, for the ground was level and in good order for galloping; so with Tommy between my legs (than which better horse was never bestrode by man in the capacity of charger), I believe I could have carried on a sort of Scythian warfare, which must needs have been most disastrous to our opponents.

Here I surely expected to be waylaid, for my boy told me such an ambush had been arranged for my reception by the sons of Sycheley. Under ordinary circumstances I do not doubt it would have occurred; but we had now entered the debateable ground between his nation and that of the Kaminyani, where, within the last

two years, several very severe engagements had been decided; so both parties feared to intrude upon it, in case they should encounter a force of the enemy.

Before me there are two days' hard riding to get to the station of the last-mentioned tribe, and through a country in which water is scarce, and, report says, game very abundant.

About four o'clock in the afternoon we overtook the waggons, outspanned near a spring, in a place surrounded with innumerable spoors of every size and description of antelope.

My friend was very hospitable. The whisky bottle was produced, and a hole made in it by sundry "tots," before we each turned in, with the hyænas and jackals singing a lullaby around our beds, far from unpleasant to one accustomed to the midnight sounds of wild Africa.

On the morrow, I found my horses in capital fettle, having had an abundance of corn at Sycheley's, and my present host having supplied them liberally over-night.

The Hottentot, who had been in a fearful funk for the last few days, seemed to be himself once more, talking with volubility as to the valiant deeds he would assuredly have done had our progress been arrested.

As the road was good, we traversed the country at a rapid pace—almost at the rate of six miles an hour—which is good travelling for this part of the world. About noon we off-saddled, and, I

am sorry to say, could obtain no water; this want telling heavily upon the energy of our nags.

Towards sundown I observed the spoor of many of the *carnivoræ*.

These are always to be noted where any tract of land becomes less frequented by the human family. To avoid a tedious *détour* we turned to the westward from the road, which then was almost due north. The track we were now following had evidently been used by the natives, for although little more than a path, it was clearly distinguishable. The sun was almost setting when my attendant called my attention to an animal standing on an adjacent knoll; and at first I found it difficult to define what it was, but at length recognized a grand old lion of the black mane species.

His curiosity seemed to be as much excited as my own, and his manner indicated that he was undecided whether to increase our mutual acquaintance, or to make a bolt of it.

I should have passed on and left him considering the matter, but that my horses "got his wind," and became most unmanageable, the led-horse doing all in his power to get loose.

However, the mount my servant rode was quite equal to the occasion, and quietly took the lead.

This beast I have not yet spoken of. I purchased him in Kania; and he was guaranteed both a good hunter and a "*saulted*" horse. My

knowledge of him had already taught me that he was certainly the former, for a steadier old garron never looked through a bridle. He was destitute of speed, but wholly unconscious of fear; and I fancy could have gone from morning until night for weeks in succession without turning a hair, if not pushed beyond his gait.

His example was beneficial, for the mount I bestrode and my led-horse, although still a bit restive, immediately followed him.

When nearly abreast of the king of beasts, standing as he was in his original position, I drew my revolver, and fired a shot over his back, with an elevation sufficient to ensure its not touching him. This hint had precisely the desired effect, for he went away "loaping" over the prairie as if he had had a pack of foxhounds at his tail.

When the sun had gone down we found a "*vley*" of water, and as there was a quantity of fallen timber lying about, we off-saddled, and tried to make ourselves comfortable.

This must have been an old camping-ground, for the reason that I was awakened during the night from the severe irritation I suffered in my left arm, which I soon discovered to have been bitten all over by "*tam-pans*," an insect synonymous to the "*jigger*" of the West Indies, but, as the Americans express it, "a little more so!"

At the moment when I write up my diary, I still have the scars upon my fore-arm and wrist, and may yet possess two or three of these un-

desirable tenants buried under my skin. English east wind will kill them, thank God! for what on earth will stand it?

Taking it all-in-all, that night was a mistake; for towards morning the horses became alarmed, and it was imperative both to myself and my servant that we should sit up and keep guard. Hyænas and jackals held high carnival; but the lions, the spoors of which we had seen in abundance, kept silent—a sure sign that they were up to mischief.

The English reader who may intend at some future day to visit the wilds of South Africa, may not think this information unworthy of notice. When he hears the monarch of the veldt making a row, and alarming by his voice the whole of the more diminutive animal denizens, he may know that his majesty is not intent on destruction, but simply calling to his mates, or defying some rivals from his matrimonial exclusiveness.

The crescent-horn of a new moon showed itself about four o'clock, and on its appearance I once more tried to court sleep, but was unable to effect my purpose.

At daybreak a thick miasmatic mist covered the ground, and in half an hour afterwards I had to have recourse to that constant companion, the quinine-bottle. When I had eaten about a pound of “*bel tong*” (sun-dried meat), we once more made a start, with a hope that the afternoon might see us at the Kaminyani station.

I was going along at a slow tripple—a pace



Wild Dogs pursuing Hartbeest.

similar to what is designated "racking" in North America—when a hartebeest crossed our course. The poor brute looked as if he were fairly worn out, for his flanks were covered with sweat and dust, his head drooped, his tail hung close to his hind-quarters, and every movement of his legs denoted intense weariness. That he saw us there could be no doubt; yet he passed on, neither increasing nor relaxing his pace. To have shot him was possible; in fact, my boy was most anxious to do so, but I stayed his hand, as we had sufficient food to last us until the termination of this day's ride.

I pulled up, and watched the poor animal struggling over a neighbouring rise, for trees were sparse, and brushwood only occurred in occasional patches. Several times it stumbled ere it reached the acclivity, which, once gained, would shut it from our view.

I could not help wondering why it fled, and who were its pursuers; but my surprise was soon dissipated, for on the spoor of the fugitive I saw, almost immediately after, several wild dogs. Then their number was increased to eighteen or twenty by some fresh arrivals. When they gained the path they all stopped short, and took stock of my cavalcade, so fearless being their manner, and so close were they at hand, that I confidently expected they would attack me in preference to following up the trail of the object of their pursuit.

It appeared to be a toss-up in their minds which game would be the most succulent; but

second thoughts brought them to the decision that the old hunt would be the best; so they resumed their chase of the worn-out hartebeest, departing over the veldt, running in a consecutive line, with heads and tails up, every few moments giving vent to their surplus feelings by a sharp, shrill yelp, more to be compared to the squeak of a fox-terrier than to the speaking of a foxhound.

The power of scent of these creatures must be really wonderful! Possibly they are much assisted by sight, for the tuft-grass leaves large patches of sand, on which the spoor of the quarry is easily discernible. They never fail to kill their game (of this I am informed by competent authority) unless it reach water of two or three feet in depth, where the larger antelopes invariably seek shelter, as in it they are able to strike their pursuers with their formidable feet, and thus disable them in succession.

There are two species of wild dog upon this continent with which I am conversant. Those I have just alluded to are striped like the hyæna, with bushy tails, and large tulip-shaped ears particularly full at the base. Their noses are short, and in general characteristic resemble the hyæna, with the exception that they do not droop off at the hind-quarters as that very ungainly animal does.

The other sort is a large yellow beast, with many of the details in construction peculiar to the English mastiff.

On the Limpopo, and in Matabeleland, I have

seen the latter ; and once, when in company with a trader, we both of us mistook an example of this species for a lion, so great was the similarity of colour. I have been told by natives who are, as I think, competent to give an opinion, that the cross between them and the civilized animal produces one of the pluckiest brutes that can be found. In Soochong, and in other parts of Bamanwatto I have seen representatives of this type, who have been much appreciated by their owners. If I was again to go on a hunting expedition to Africa, I should desire to have nothing but these animals with me, for the purpose of pursuing game ; for unlike our British breed, they would not descend to hiding themselves underneath, and even *in* the waggon, when opportunity offers, but would come out, and man-, or rather dog-fully bay all aggressors. At one period of my life, I was as fond of, and trusted as much to, the English dog, as man could do ; however, now my experiences of his character under other than native circumstances has caused me to lose all confidence in him (for no more sorry curs existed than the English half-bred bull dogs which were my companions during a previous sojourn in these hunting-grounds), thus I would rather have a native cur than ever so finely bred an English hound to be my companion in future.

About three o'clock I crossed a stream which is a tributary of the Notawani. Trees grew in profusion on either side of its banks, and many a bird cheered the silence with its melody. Guinea-

fowl rushed across the path from every side, often so close as positively to alarm the horses, whilst that splendid bird here denominated a pheasant (but properly speaking a francolin) ran along the path in front of me in such numerous quantities as an English sportsman would long to see his partridges a few days before the 1st of September.

A stony and very rapid descent, through timber of unusually fine proportions, led down to the Kaminyani village. The sand lying on the path between the stones, which are here scattered in every direction, was one perfect mass of hyænas' spoor, small and large footprints being equally distributed—a plain indication to me that where the carcase lay, there were the animals who fed on it.

As I rode into the village a white man saluted me, and asked me to become his guest.

Dismounting from my horse, he saw that I was "chattering" from fever, and gave me a draught of Bouchue and quinine, strong enough to make any one's hair curl, and to bring an inexperienced dead man to life again.

I swallowed the filthy-tasting mixture, and asked,—

"Where are all the people?"

He answered me in the well-known words of Byron,—

"The angel of Death spread his wings on the blast."

"A fearful epidemic is raging in the place, and a good half of the people are dead!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

ALONE.

THE approach being so beautiful, it struck me as particularly sad that the village of Kaminyani should have come into such grievous straits through pestilence; moreover, the situation of this station, from its elevation, is such as to have made me believe it healthy in the highest degree.

The troubles of this people have not commenced with this visitation, for within the last two years their station has been attacked by Sycheley's tribe, when the slaughter was considerable; but the defenders' prowess was so great as to drive the enemy out with considerable loss. The chief, who is a young man of about five or six and twenty, distinguished himself by his valour and judgment, being now, as report says, a most popular king in consequence.

The Kaminyani were originally natives of the Transvaal, where they had the character of being a most industrious, hard-working race. Becoming possessed of large herds of cattle, the management of which they understand very thoroughly, they excited the cupidity of the Boers, who took to

enforcing all sorts of illegal taxation upon them—in fact, literally submitting them to a heavy blackmail. So the tribe made an exodus from the land of their fathers, and settled where they now are, Sycheley having invited them to take possession of the adjoining country, of which he claimed to be Suzerain.

It was stipulated that the father of the present ruler should pay annually a tribute for this concession—an ox, a goat, or some other trifle.

Doubtless this would have continued to be paid, but that a demand was made upon the Kaminyani so excessive as to cause a peremptory refusal to grant the imposition.

War was the result, and I am informed that no less than six thousand head of cattle fell into their possession on the occasion of one raid they made into Sycheley's country.

I sent, and made known to the chief that I had arrived; and a few hours after he visited me with a numerous force of attendants, all armed to the teeth.

I did not like their manner; for it impressed me with the idea that I was far from welcome.

As I expected, they at once desired me to tell them all the news of my stay with their hostile neighbours; and I declined to furnish any, for although I had no friendship for the people or chief of the last station I had been at, I considered that under the circumstances I was not justified in acting as spy.

In the course of our interview I learned another reason for their objection to the visit of a white man. During several of the skirmishes in which they had lately been engaged, two white men had assisted their enemies in action, one of whom was known to have shot no less than six of this young chief's people.

However, I explained to him that I, or my Government, ought not to be made to suffer for the misconduct of others, whose residence was beyond the limits of civilization; that here we had no power to control them; and that however much we could not help regretting their conduct, it was quite impossible to prevent or punish it.

Here my difficulties did not end, for a new source of danger arose. Some of the Kaminyani recognized my Hottentot, and swore that he had been with Sycheley's people in one of the late battles. At this my servant turned as white as a black man could, and I felt that his expression and demeanour gave great evidence of guilt. I can quite believe that the fellow had been here, as was surmised; and if so, it shows certainly a great want of judgment in him to come thus into the lion's den.

Words began to run high, and many an angry scowl was directed upon me by the swart visages around; but I took the bull by the horns, and pointed out to them that my after-rider was under my protection, and that any

injury done to him in his present capacity I should most assuredly resent.

The chief immediately inquired what I could do with such odds against me?

In response I tapped the butt of my revolver, and explained that the lives of some of his people would be forfeited ere I could be disabled. My determined manner, I think, must have favourably impressed the chief, for the unpleasant subject was dropped, and he promised to pay me a second visit as soon as he had had time to consult with his headmen.

At midnight the Hottentot awoke me.

"My master," he said, "we are to be killed in the morning. Let us mount our horses and go."

I answered, "No! I will not leave until I have seen the chief again; but you may take the blessing-horse if you fear for your life. Ride towards the junction of the Limpopo and Notawaney. I will follow when my business is done, and there I shall expect to find you."

He refused to ride, because, as he said,—

"They will hear the horse's feet among the stones that lead through the village down to the river."

"Do as you please," I answered; "bring me the other revolver." And he soon placed the weapon in my hands. I laid it with its companion under my pillow, and fell asleep.

At sunrise the fellow had disappeared, so that I was thrown entirely upon my own resources.

When the appointed time arrived for my final meeting with the chief, he did not come, but with a large force of attendants galloped past my halting-place, many of his followers shouting at me in terms of derision when I made my appearance on the roadside.

In consequence of this I saddled, and started for the north-east in anything but a satisfactory state of mind.

Evil fortune seemed to follow me wherever I went, and I believe I felt it more at this place than I had done at any other station I visited, and for this reason. I know this tribe to be very plucky, skilled in cattle management, and nearly every individual of it to be a first-rate driver. Many, moreover, spoke the Boer dialect, which would render communication on the part of the transport officers with them easier than with those who are only acquainted with their native tongue.

I found the path speedily; and after I had crossed the river, and had made the ascent to the veldt beyond and above it, where the road is entirely composed of sand, I hoped to find the spoor of my boy, which I could not fail to recognize on account of the veldt-shoon which he wore.

But no trace of him could I discover.

The Hottentot, doubtless, I surmised, was too wily for this, and fearing that his enemies might spoor him, had in consequence struck out over

the plain. Besides, as I mentioned previously, jackal and hyæna footprints were so numerous that it was more than probable they would have obliterated the impressions left on the ground over night by a solitary pedestrian.

After a long, tiring, and anything but pleasant ride—for I was sick at heart, in mind, and in body—I off-saddled half an hour before sundown, where wood was obtainable in abundance, since it would be necessary to keep up good fires all night. The horses gave me much trouble, and required constant attention to prevent their stampeding.

At last day broke, disclosing the surrounding vegetation covered with a heavy coating of hoar frost. The cold was most bitter, and its intensity told both upon myself and my animals, the latter standing in one and the same position, shivering as though suffering from a fit of ague.

That morning I rode the bless-horse, because he was steadier to be shot off than the others; besides, if you dismounted while hunting, by bringing the reins reversed down over his head and leaving them hanging, he would remain waiting for hours.

After I had started about half an hour, a magnificent koodo came out of some brush growing on the edge of a rocky coppie.

The animal stared at me with amazement, and so afforded me an opportunity of pulling up to dismount, and take a careful shot.

The bullet was placed a little too far back, so the game ran several hundred yards before it fell. I found it to be a noble bull, and I was sorry I had been obliged to destroy it, when I could avail myself of so small a portion of the valuable flesh.

I grilled the kidney over a fire, and took a few pounds of meat along with me.

Already I saw two or three jackals in a most interested manner taking notice of my proceedings. It seemed a tempting of Providence, and an inducement to allow me to be starved, that I left the delicious food for the gratification of these freebooters.

However, soon after I met a man and two women, each of whom carried a load of that yellow bark so much in use in this part of the world for dying the hide-side of carosses. They were fagged out and hungry, so I dismounted, pointed to the back-spoor of my horse's feet, and indicated the direction where the carcase lay, also explaining the nature of the animal by drawing imaginary lines over my horse's back and withers. I then motioned with my hands the shape of the antelope's corkscrew horns. Although neither of them comprehended a word of my dialect, they thoroughly understood the meaning of my pantomimic information, and left me hurriedly without a word of gratitude or thanks, in search of the promised treat.

Resuming my journey, I found the track lent

too much to the east, so I deviated to the northward. Before me, but still far off, were a succession of green hills, upon which timber appeared to grow in considerable luxuriance; and believing them to be the commencement of the high, rolling land that margins the Limpopo, I determined to ride towards them.

This country is totally deserted, for I have not seen a soul except the people I have sent in search of the koodoo, and I surmise this to be a result of the intestine wars that have been raging between the different chiefs of the locality.

About three in the afternoon I dismounted to let my horses feed in proximity to a path which I had decided to follow.

It is very lonely. Not a human creature near me of any sort. Even the Hottentot was a link between myself and my race, however poor a one; but he has gone, and the only sound that speaks of life is the clipping and grinding of my horses' teeth as they snatch a meal from the brown and shrivelled grass.

I am wrong! As I wander about in search of firing for the approaching night, I suddenly come upon a scene far from pleasant.

Human life *has* been here! Lying crouched under a diminutive hedge, erected doubtless as a shelter from the wind, with the remains of a fire close by, are three dead bodies.

Horribly repulsive they are. The whole of each of these is intact, but the skins are dried up

like parchment, and the faces drawn, the lips curled, and exhibiting the perfect white teeth closed tight in the agony of starvation.

Some trifling articles of property they possessed, still cling to the emaciated forms. A few beads and iron ornaments yet deck the ghastly remains. On account of these I come to the conclusion that they are Mashoonas, who are the mechanics, and artisans that work in metals, in this part of the world. Poor wretches ! they have doubtlessly come from their far distant home, on the luxuriant banks of the Zambesi, to hire themselves out to the whites at the Diamond Fields.

Although I am accustomed to stranger and wilder scenes than fall to the lot of most men to be the witnesses of, still there is something so touching in this terrible sight, seen in the fast-falling dimness of evening, that I turn hastily from the spot, quickly saddle my horse, and with haste press forward for an hour or two, until change of scenery, and the immediate necessity of finding a camping-ground, stays me at a convenient place, many a mile from where the unburied remains of mortality lie, mummy-like, upon the tufted sand.

Another uncomfortable night. The air bitterly cold, and in spite of large quantities of quinine I suffer severely from fever, that strongest barrier for the prevention of the inroads of the aggressive white man that Africa possesses.

At sunrise, or rather later, while the horses are yet feeding, and I am cooking my morning repast, with more than ordinary satisfaction I see the white tilt of a waggon slowly toiling on towards my resting-place.

Those who have travelled much by sea, know with what pleasure a sail on the distant horizon of a far-off and unfrequented ocean is viewed. Such was the sensation I now experienced.

I hoped it might be the conveyance of a Boer, and desired more fervently still that it might be that of an English-speaking trader. It proved to be the former.

The stranger was going south—for property, and even lives of white people, had become so much endangered, that this man was returning with his belongings to the Transvaal. Fortunately, he spoke English fairly. With him he had several natives, one of whom had been, for some time, employed by a Mr. Solomon, who traded between Lake N'gami and Bamanwatto, and consequently knew a little English.

After much persuasion I induced him to let me hire this boy, the offer of good pay and a speedy return tempting his cupidity.

Thus I obtained another after-rider. The wife and child of the Boer were down with fever; so, my supply of the great necessary, quinine, being abundant, I gave the father about a quarter of an ounce of that valuable medicine, in return for which gift he expressed the most heartfelt grati-

tude, adding that we did not know but that some occasion might occur when he could be of assistance to me. Bidding each other good-bye with all kinds of professions of friendship, my journey was renewed.

A little before nightfall I reached the trysting-place which I made with my Hottentot; but he was not to be seen.

From here I turned north, pursuing my way for several days, the events of each being but a repetition of the other. The kraals I visited were not more favourably disposed than those I have previously mentioned. Learning that a revolution had taken place in Bamanwatto, and that the tribe had become divided against itself, the one portion under Kamani, the other under Kama, and that hostilities were even now occurring between them; also, that they apprehended an immediate attack from the Matabele king, I considered it would be useless for me to visit Soochong.

As the length of time during which I had been absent from Natal was now much longer than I had anticipated, I decided to retrace my steps, and visit several large stations to the westward of the Transvaal, and lying between my former route and the river Limpopo.

My new attendant was a willing and attentive lad, but looked far from strong, doubtless having suffered hard times in his trek down from the interior in company with his last master; there-

fore I was not surprised when he came to me one day, complaining of the most violent pains in his stomach. When dismounted, on several occasions, he twisted and contorted his body into every position, with the hope of obtaining relief; but all appeared to be of no avail, as he became gradually worse and worse, until one afternoon I was obliged to halt at an early hour, as I could not bear witnessing the agony which the poor fellow was going through.

To make haste I knew to be my duty, but I could not desert a human being enduring pain, so I made camp, employing every remedy I could think of to relieve him; but all of no avail.

After dark, when the thermometer had gone almost down to freezing-point, the agony appeared to grow more intense, and I began to fear for the boy's life.

About ten o'clock he died.

Many an adventure in many a land has the writer of these words encountered—old soldier, old hunter, old traveller as he is! But it was now, for the first time, that he adopted a new profession, gained one more fresh experience, and that one of the saddest of a lifetime.

In the dim, misty light of the moon, he went down on his knees, and with his fingers dug, or rather scraped, a grave in the sand—a tedious and painful operation. Then he took up the dead black boy, and with perhaps just a hope that he had now reached the happy hunting-grounds, laid



A Midnight Disturber.

him neatly and tenderly in the hole, and once more scraped the sand together, until it was all filled up again. "He" lay below the ground, wrapped in his skin caross!

Yes! I had turned grave-digger in my old age—and for the last time, I sincerely trust!

While these solemn obsequies were being performed, a lion roared across the river! His voice was deep and sonorous, quite as impressive upon such an occasion as a volley of musketry saluting for the last time the soldier laid in his resting-place, ere his comrades march away to the inspiring strains of a quick-step.

Presently, from the adjacent koppies to the west of my camp, other members of the feline family responded.

Believing them to be in close proximity to me, I was compelled to adjourn to my horses, where, piling fresh fuel on the fire, I sat and thought, the livelong night through, how easy it is to die, and how little a man can do to help himself or another when the sands of life are ebbing away.

The lions came down close to me once; but, either they were not hungry, or feared the fire—or possibly they might have been what the Buschman called "‘good lions’ who had not yet learned to kill horses or bullocks," for they left me unmolested.

If they could have been aware how powerless I was to resist them, I question whether I should have got off so easily!

My own health has become so bad, that, although I do not think I fear to die even in this lonely position, yet I cannot help believing that my course is nearly run, and that I never again shall set eyes upon the land of my birth.

It would be but one more added to the lengthy list of the sons of Britain, who have found African soil their last resting-place !

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WANDERING.

It would be impossible for any one to conceive three more miserable days than those which I experienced in my southward course.

The depression of their rider seemed to affect the horses ; for know, dear reader, that there is a great amount of animal magnetism between the horseman and the animal he bestrides ; nor is this to be wondered at in the present instance, for their food had been of the scantiest. A tired nag makes a tired man ; but when both are sick at heart, and weary from fatigue and disease, it is no easy matter to get over the ground. If I could have travelled by night I do not think I should have felt the journey so irksome ; but being forced to select day, the power of the sun was so great that the top of my head seemed as though it were covered with coals of fire.

Scarcely ever have I seen game in such abundance as in this part of the country, spoor of every description being discernible in all directions ; among which I distinguished the

immense circular impression made by the elephant, the slipper-like foot-track of the giraffe, and the deep indentation of the cloven hoof of the eland, and, more noticeable still, of the water-bok. Nor was feathered game wanting, for frequently, on rapid wings, the bush-koran would flash almost under my chargers' hoofs, often causing both them and me to start, from the suddenness with which they would break into view, and the loud whirr made by their strong pinions. “Pauw” were also numerous; of this, noblest among winged fowl, I have distinctly recognized two species in South Africa, but neither is identical with the bustard of Europe and North Africa, although currently supposed so to be.

In the afternoon, when a trifling halt had been made, having heard a rustling in the bush, and the apparent sound of breaking of branches—being aware of the description of animal I might expect from these indications, I turned my sight in that direction, and was rewarded with a view of over a dozen male elephants, several of which had splendid tusks. How many were in the drove is quite impossible for me to say, for when feeding, which they were then doing, they scatter out widely through the woodland.

Near sundown, when I had selected my camping-ground for the night, some giraffes came down and had a quiet stare at me, appearing to be actuated entirely by curiosity; for they twisted their long necks from side to side, the better to



An Intelligent Family Party.

obtain a view of my proceedings, whilst their large luminous and intelligent eyes appeared to express the thoughts that extreme wonderment was floating through their minds. To destroy so much meat, for I could only take a few pounds away, I was very loth; and shortly after I received a reward for sparing the giants, for a little steinbok, an animal not larger than the roe-deer of Scotland, peered through a mapani bush. I discovered his presence by the horses turning round and looking anxiously in the direction of the creature. My hands trembled so, that to fire anything but a resting shot would have been a miss. However, fortunately I did not, and soon had some venison, the sweetest flesh of all the South African antelope, broiling on the fire.

The only chance, I can see, of getting out of all my difficulties, is to hurry on as rapidly as possible to the southward. The nearest Kaffir station that I am aware of must still be sixty or seventy miles distant; and how very easily may I not manage to miss it by an ever so slight a deviation to the right or left! And the natural characteristics of the features of the country here are so exactly similar, that there is scarcely anything in the shape of landmark to show you the error of your ways.

Again, as you leave the Limpopo, facing towards the colony, grass and vegetation become more scarce, game grows less abundant, and human population almost disappears.

The existence of water I am quite unacquainted with, until a spruit in the neighbourhood of Matchaping's is reached ; and if report speaks truly, his station itself is hardly pressed for a supply of the invaluable fluid

I entered into a waste of wild, barren, and unfruitful land. It was covered with a few scattered thorn bushes, and neither could I discover a sign of animal or human life in any direction.

Before me lay extended this immense steppe, and looking in front I scarcely appeared to have made any progress at all, for the view bore the same uninviting characteristics as the country I was leaving behind. Moreover, that day and the previous one, not a drop of water had passed my horses' lips. I, too, was in the same predicament, for I left the colony too hurriedly to remember the advantages that a flask would bring upon occasions such as the present.

A wild stillness hung upon all sides, not even a vulture or eagle soared into the pitiless sky. A deathly calm reigned. Was this then to be the end of my travels? Was this to be the finish of a life full of excitement and adventure? and was this arid plain to be my unknown burial-ground?

I could hardly believe so, and am consoled by the old, but unexploded adage,—

"While there is life there is hope,"

"Hold up, Bob, old man!" I spoke sharply

that time, for the big horse had stumbled heavily, almost sending me to mother earth. Little use was it to shout "hold up" however, for the cream-colour was thoroughly worn out, so I replaced the saddle on Tommy, and led the others slowly and toilfully along.

Poor brute! I could see that it was no want of inclination that made him lag, but want of physical power. His big frame had suffered fearfully. His once well-rounded barrel had entirely disappeared, while the powerful limbs, once so full of muscle, looked twice as large as was necessary to support so emaciated a carcass.

But the little horse was still all right, comparatively speaking. He was a wonderful "plucked one," with a heart as large as an ox. Dear old Tommy! If I live for five times the ordinary span allotted to man's life, I assuredly promise, and faithfully too, never to forget your gallant, brave self. I have often said to myself, and meant it, "if in me the power lies, you shall yet feed on some of the green pasture-lands of my native country."

Future travellers in Africa would do well carefully to read and remember the piece of advice I am about to give them.

An African horse under fifteen hands in height, will do much more work, and stand far more "bucketting about" and exposure, than one that measures higher.

The sun had just commenced to go down, when

a rapid change in the face of the country made its appearance, bushes and trees becoming much more numerous.

After proceeding about a mile or two, I found myself upon the margin of a dry river-bed. In its sandy bottom I saw the traces of bullock and goat spoor. These I followed some way, when I found a foetid pool of stinkingly putrid water. Its edges were a mass of mud, but my animals rushed into it all the same, perfectly regardless of the probability of becoming mired.

In truth, such an accident nearly happened, but a judicious use of spur and bridle enabled me to prevent the casualty.

Shortly after I came to a mealie field, in which I saw several kraals; but although I asked most solicitously for the desired "metsea" (water), the unfeeling people refused to give me any, for I can scarcely imagine them to have been totally without this necessary to existence.

With feelings much opposed to the showering of blessings on their heads, although I said nought, but thought a great deal (for nothing depreciates a white man in the eyes of a native more than to give way to petulance or anger in his presence), I turned my horses' heads eastward, and luckily came across the fresh spoor of a waggon.

That it was but a rickety conveyance I at once saw, for the wheels had wobbled to such an extent as to make the indentations on the sand

most irregular. Believing that a white would not trust himself so far inland with such an antidiluvian conveyance, I did not hesitate in my decision that it was the property of a Kaffir. Following this God-sent, tell-tale track, I soon passed in between several rocky koppies, where the road became more clearly defined. In and out, and round the base of these numerous hillocks I wended my way, ultimately coming out upon a large plateau, thickly packed with Kaffir dwellings.

I rode at once to the kotla. Old Matchaping was sitting, in a garb almost approaching to nudity, cowering over a small fire, with half-a-dozen of his headmen in attendance upon him. All of them looked at me with surprise—one in particular, whom I had not seen for years. It was Secomi, once king of Bamanwatto, now a refugee, sheltered by his old friend, to whose staff he is attached.

Matchaping is a slightly built man of about five feet ten, with a well-formed, but small head, and a face ornamented by the most ridiculous turn-up nose, that makes a person feel inclined to laugh on first seeing his features.

Secomi, on the other hand, is stouter, but not so tall; and age having much enfeebled him, the once dreaded and powerful chief is now become a worn-out and puny man. He had a peculiar ornament, and one which I have never seen in use before, fastened to the wool on the

apex of his crown, namely, the “scut” of a hare, which by some means or other he had managed to make stand up perpendicularly, and which gave his appearance a most fantastic look.

But that I knew the habits of these people, I should have supposed myself a very unwelcome guest, for no one addressed me, no one rose to acknowledge my advent—all remained cowering over the fire, merely raising an eye occasionally as if to inspect me, with that expression on their countenances which may be often noticed in the face of a sly child. I asked for “metsea.”

A gourd that stood by was handed me, which must have held a pint, yet I drained it to the bottom.

In trying to dismount I fell, my strength seeming to leave me all on a sudden.

With difficulty I regained a sitting position, while my horses stood looking at me, with grief depicted in their eyes at seeing their travelling-companion in such a plight.

At length the old king and one of his people helped me to rise, and as he put his arm under my shoulder he whispered in my ear the word “dumela” (welcome).

That single intonation told me that I should be treated as a friend. The two old men led me to a thing that looked like a waggon-house. It had only three sides and no roof. The material it was constructed of was wattle and daub; however it was sufficient to shelter me from the cold

wind which was beginning to rise at the approach of darkness.

In a corner were some "green" bullock hides, and on these I seated myself, when, leaning back against some old waggon gear, I suppose I fainted.

How long I remained in this state I cannot say, for night soon followed.

When I became conscious, however, there sat the old chief on a stool, and in addition to his former attendant he had now a fine-looking, well-grown young man by his side.

As soon as my host saw I had recovered from the stupor, he said something to his son—for I afterwards learnt that the new comer was such—who at once disappeared, but soon returned with a cartle from a waggon.

Upon this they spread the hides and my blankets, one of my own saddles being put under my head for a pillow.

Beside me, and within reach of my hand, were laid my revolvers, rifle, and bandolier, whilst the other saddle, bridle, girths, and the loose paraphernalia of my horse-gear, were between my couch and the hut wall.

Soon after, the youngster was despatched upon another errand, and when he came back he bore sticks and a lighted faggot, with which in a few moments he made a good fire.

As I was shivering at that time with ague that takes its intermediate turn in African fever, the warmth was most grateful.

At length the chief himself went out, but returned after a short absence, bringing with him a gourd holding about two quarts of Kaffir beer. This nauseous draught I would have refused, for it looks murky, and is sour foul stuff; but patting me on the head, he took a little himself, and indicated by speech and gestures that it would please him if I would drink it all.

I did so, lay down, and felt as if I should burst.

At length I could stand the oppression no longer; so I struggled to my feet, gained the entrance of the place, and was as sick as man could well be.

This relieved me; and on returning to my resting-place, feeling very faint, old Matchaping was again equal to the occasion.

His son was once more despatched upon an errand.

When he came back he took from under his carosse a bottle of Hollands gin.

From it the chief made over a pint of hot toddy, in it put some stuff—I found out later that it was composed of honey, grease, and bird-peppers.

I struggled through the compound, which, in point of fact, was far from bad, fell asleep almost immediately, and woke in the morning free from fever.

When I opened my eyes, soon after break of day, there still sat the old chief upon the stool he

had occupied in the evening, with his carosse wrapped around him, while his head nodded with an inclination to sleep which his tired nature almost failed to oppose.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN OLD FOX.

I ASKED Matchaping about my horses, and received his assurance that they were all right.

Thus I had nothing to do but to rest where I was, until my strength was sufficiently restored for me to broach the object of my mission to him.

To my surprise, who should present himself early in the day but my Hottentot.

His return was most acceptable, for now I should have some one who would attend to my wants and look after my animals.

I knew he was a sad rogue, and knew that he would lose no opportunity of extorting money from my funds; a specimen of which I began to believe he was now attempting, for he stated that each horse required two buckets of water, and that he could not obtain it at less than a shilling a bucket.

I believe had I been strong enough I should have launched something at his ugly head. Afterwards, however, I was glad I had not done so, for I

learnt with astonishment that all the water drunk at Matchaping's station had to be carried several miles, and to be ladled out of a pit sixty or seventy feet deep. Even then, by paying such an exorbitant price, it was by no means sure I could obtain a sufficient quantity for myself and my horses; for you cannot bribe a Kaffir woman to do a single act of service for you unless she has the permission of her lord and master, for she never is actuated by feelings of cupidity.

However, Matchaping would not allow his guest to be treated with any want of courtesy, so he gave a peremptory order that the quantity I needed should at once be forthcoming.

After it had been deposited in several broken Kaffir crocks, it was discovered that the horses were nowhere to be found, although it was reported that they were observed an hour or two previously feeding on a koppie side. But the chief's son, with several young men started, in pursuit, ultimately finding the spoor, and by sunset the truants were brought back. Poor brutes! it was no wish on their part to leave their master, but simply that the unquenchable desire to drink had caused them to wander in search of a place where the longing might be gratified.

My after-rider had some wonderful tales to tell about his escape from the Kaminyani. He had been followed, he stated, many miles, which had compelled him to leave the track, and sleep

the first night in a small knoll of brushwood; thence he made his way to the Notawani River, where he was sorely frightened by the lions, which, he said, were so saucy that they totally disregarded his fire, which he feared to make too large lest it should attract the notice of his enemies; so he watched his chance for the beasts being out of the way, when stealing down to the river bed, and standing in a pool of water, he passed the night in that position. The big cats evidently missed him, for they trekked him to the stream and kept purring up and down its banks until the day broke. As there are a good many crocodiles in this river, it appears marvelous that he should have adopted such a course, and still more wonderful that one of these most objectionable of the amphibiæ had not seized him.

My attendant did not seem a bit depressed in spirit by the hardships he had so lately encountered, and appeared quite as much delighted to see me as I was to see his ungainly form again.

A Boer came into the station that evening, and as I had only been able to obtain some boiled mealies for my noonday feed, I was too happy to accept some stewed antelope which he brought me. He was a very good fellow in his way, knew of me by reputation, and kindly expressed grief at my worn-out appearance. In the most simple form he stated that he had no objection to

be of what assistance he could to me individually, but that he declined to countenance the taking of the Transvaal by my countrymen.

“We’ll have a fight for it,” he continued; “and if I should fall into British hands, probably you will be able to do me a good turn.”

Matchaping visited me in the evening. His life has been a strange one, and full of adventure. Popular opinion amongst his people in his early days was so much opposed to him, that he was obliged to fly with a minority of the tribe, and seek shelter with Sycheley.

This old fox he accused of being the cause of these difficulties; however, Matchaping remained under his protection for several years, when his people had become sufficiently numerous to assert their independence and to depart, but Sycheley insisted upon their remaining, and threatened to attack them did they attempt to go; however, Matchaping told his oppressor, “We are going, and if you try to stop us, although the odds are against us, we will fight like brave men.”

His former home was in the Transvaal, from whence he was driven by the Boers; and up to this day, although many years have passed since that took place, he never ceases to regret the green hills and abundance of water which was found in the land where he had spent his childhood.

His family is numerous, and I never saw finer specimens of the Kaffir than are his sons.

He expressed a great desire to be allowed to return to his old home; and it is, in my opinion, a great pity that he could not be reinstated in the lands of his fathers, for I am convinced he would be a true and a strong ally of the Government; moreover, his tribe is industrious and frugal, and possessed of considerable herds of cattle, the management of which they thoroughly understand.

Secomi told me that he had correct information that a revolution had taken place at Soochong, and that Kama had retired to a watering-place twenty or thirty miles from his late capital. This old gentleman devoutly prayed for the success of his son Kamani; for, added he, with considerable feeling, "Then I shall be able to go back to my own country once more."

During the night there was a great amount of excitement, caused by a hungry hyena attempting to steal a child from the side of its mother.

My Hottentot, followed by myself, rushed to the rescue. He vowed he had seen the intruder and hit it with a stick; although close to him, I saw nothing.

The child, nevertheless, was severely bitten.

Next morning I had my interview with Mat-chaping and his head-men.

It resulted in my hearing the old story told over again.

"If I send my young men away, to help you in Natal, Sycheley will eat me up."

I spent over a couple of hours arguing with him that his best policy would be to gain our friendship by proving himself favourable towards the Imperial Government, and that, as allies, we would soon put a stop to any acts of enmity that a hostile chief might meditate. However, my eloquence was of no avail; every one of his councillors supported him in his resolve; therefore I was well aware that anything I could say further would fail to alter the verdict they had arrived at. In consequence I determined to depart in the morning for Makose, a long ride, the principal station of which is situated on the edge of the Transvaal. The chief there is one of the most powerful in far Kaffirland, and now a very old man. He is reported in his younger days to have been one of the most aspiring and brave warriors that existed within a long distance of his country.

At daybreak, much to my annoyance, I found that the horses had been turned out, and could not be found.

Matchaping again aided me, but it was ten o'clock before I was in the saddle.

Leaving the town, through which the chief walked as an evidence of his good fellowship, so that, as he expressed it, "his people might know me again when I returned to visit him," we passed through a large extent of mealie country stretching as far as the eye could see in either direction.

On gaining its southern limits my old friend halted, clapped me on the back, shook hands, and bid me a cordial adieu.

With the exception of Hashesheba, I found this old gentleman one of the most thoughtful and kind I had encountered in my travels, and I believe that under this black skin beats as noble and good a heart as is ever encountered in civilized England.

Good-bye, Matchaping! I may never see you again, but I wish you every prosperity and happiness.

On leaving my late host, we entered a thickly-wooded land, in many places the timber being not only large but handsome; and in many parts of it, had the season been a less dry one, doubtless water would have been found.

The spoor of game also became abundant; none of it, however, came into view, except a *koodoo* and some *harte beast*.

The unsettled state of the country prevents the people from hunting as much as of yore; and there is a second reason for game having been so much more numerous than in former years, viz. the sale and importation of gunpowder having been prohibited through the Transvaal.

At night we crossed a small stream and slept close to a Kaffir kraal, standing in a mealie garden, the only occupants of which were eight or ten girls, the senior of the party appearing not to exceed twelve years of age.

Why they should be left in such an unprotected position I know not, but believe that it had something to do with some of their religious ceremonies.

These poor little waifs of humanity lent me a cooking-pot, and sold me several pumpkins, which, with the aid of a piece of beltung brought by the Tottie from our last resting-place, I was enabled to make a fairly good meal.

The juvenile women appeared to be excessively timorous, evincing more dread of my servant than of myself; so I forbid him to go near their hut—a command I felt convinced he would violate if opportunity occurred. In fact, from the glance he gave me, I imagined that I saw in his eye an inclination to dispute my authority. This insubordination doubtless resulted from his knowledge of the weak state of health I was in.

As soon as the sun was an hour high—for neither horses nor cattle will drink at break of day—we resumed our course to the southward, and passed through a large extent of savannah land, which had the appearance of having been once under cultivation. A splendid leopard crossed our path, not fifty yards ahead. For upwards of several seconds he stopped and surveyed us; and I do not think, in all my hunting experience, I have witnessed an animal with such a splendid coat. He was long in the body and short in the legs, with limbs almost as powerful as those of a lioness, and his stomach hung so

low that there could scarcely be a doubt that the previous night's hunting had been very successful.

Quietly, and evidently totally unconscious of harm, he stood watching us, whilst his tail in graceful bends swayed to and fro. Halting to get my rifle, he seemed to reconsider his position and circumstances, so bounded over the high grass in front of him to the side of an adjoining koppie, where he was instantly chevied and jeered at by a most patriarchal family of baboons.

Soon after mid-day we entered mealie gardens, now apparently disused for some time; and when we had traversed these, passing through a kloof, a most beautiful view opened before us—thousands and thousands of acres of mealie fields, from which the ripe crops had just been harvested. Still not a human being was in sight.

I dismounted, ascended some elevated ground, and strained my eyes in every direction; yet no indication of man's presence could I see. It appeared to me that every step I took flushed turtle-doves, partridges, koran, and quail; while hares, as thickly as rabbits in a well-stocked warren, scuttled about in every direction.

Never was there a country more specially adapted for the use of pointers and setters; for you could see them ranging uninterruptedly for upwards of half a mile in front of you. After resting for an hour we resaddled, I frequently demanding from the boy where this station of Makosie was, and he as often assuring me that we should be there in ten minutes or a quarter of

an hour. Incessant disappointment made me give way to temper, and I sulkily resolved to make no further inquiries.

It might have been four o'clock, or perhaps later, when, in the far-off distance, I perceived the white tilt of a waggon.

Shaking up my horses, I sharpened my pace, and overtook it in half an hour.

From the Kaffir who owned it I learnt that the station was still nine or ten miles off.

This was exceedingly disappointing, for I was almost dead from thirst, although I had carried a bullet in my mouth for two or three hours. As we were about to move forwards, to my astonishment the elder of the Kaffirs, who appeared chief amongst them, brought me, in a most gracious manner, a large melon.

I know it was all but destitute of flavour, but the coolness and moisture made it a perfect treasure, more particularly as it had been so unexpectedly produced.

The shades of night had long fallen, and lights illuminated the numerous kraals, which are situated in tiers upon the hillside, when we entered Makosie.

“ And all the night a solemn stillness holds,
Save when the moping owl does to the moon complain.”

These lines floated through my brain, the difference being only that here the jackals bayed the dogs, and from the neighbouring heights the dogs answered from the town.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A DANISH LADY.

WITH most extraordinary good luck I distinguished a square-built cabin.

Now, as every Bechuana lives in a round hut, from the chief to his lowest subordinates, I concluded that a European dwelt here.

Nor was I mistaken in my surmise; for, on pulling up at the door, a little Danish woman, whose language I could not speak a word of, presented herself. She was the wife of the Lutheran missionary; but her husband was from home, he having undertaken a distant journey to no less a personage than my friend Mr. Jansen, to obtain a supply of the necessaries of life. Poor, good soul! she unhesitatingly asked me to enter, which I did, in no way loth; and furnished me with a simple meal, no doubt of the best viands her establishment possessed.

It was a bitter cold night—so cold, indeed, that my three horses refused to feed, but stood and shivered, first resting one leg and then the other; for no shelter was to be obtained for them anywhere.

I slept on a truckle bed; but my slumber was far from sound, as my poor beasts without indicated by their restlessness that they felt their treatment to be anything but what they deserved.

In the morning my servant was despatched to make my arrival known to the chief; and before going he asked me for a sovereign; for, said he, "I have any number of relatives residing here."

After an absence of three hours the beast returned, so drunk that he could not articulate; but, squatting on the ground, looked up into my face, grinning like a hyæna. I kicked him into an upright position; and if I had had a jambok, he would have felt its lithe sting upon his dirty yellow hide! I hurried up to the kotla, where I found the old chief among a perfect throng of his people.

My presence was evidently very objectionable, yet I insisted upon having a hearing.

I was aware, too, that I could but very imperfectly express myself. However, after a few minutes one of the sable crew came forward to my assistance.

Failure again I saw staring me in the face; so I departed, promising to renew my visit on the following morning, when I should be able to avail myself of the services of the Hottentot.

A couple of days more were absolutely necessary to rest my animals, and I was obliged to be satisfied; for, even if no benefit should accrue to myself, the quadrupeds at all events would

obtain plenty of grass and water. With the blessing I began to think it was all up ; for he lay down, and no manner of inducement could get him to rise. However, in the afternoon, having had his nostrils and mouth sponged out with warm water, and some soaked mealies having been given to him, he was able to get on his legs and rejoin his companions.

I think that much of the poor animal's powers of endurance becoming exhausted was due to his back being severely galled, the reason being that the after-rider possesses one of the most villainous seats upon a saddle that it is possible to imagine. A second cause I cannot fail to lay great stress upon—viz., that General Clifford supplied me with such accoutrements as would be a disgrace to any one ! I called the storekeeper's attention to the circumstance, and he at once condoled with me, the General did not.

The success of my journey was deemed by the authorities to be one of great importance, yet no attention was paid by the chief in command to the minutiae of detail, the need for which might have ruined the whole undertaking.

My second interview took place with the chief, and was a very stormy one.

The king is, in my opinion, an imbecile old fool, and permits himself to be controlled by any one who has pluck enough to contradict him. However, he feared so much for my personal safety that he sent an escort with me to, where I had slept,

who had instructions to see me safe off the premises.

The enmity here is caused by the want of success on the part of our troops in the commencement of the Zulu war; and this has been made use of, and exaggerated by the Boers on the Western Frontier; and the Kaffirs, in their ignorance, I am disposed to think, believe the Transvaal will be retaken by its former owners, when they will be certain to feel the resentment of the descendants of Holland in far from a pleasant manner, should they show the slightest mark of amity towards us.

I said farewell to my lonely little hostess. She looked very sad and troubled in mind. Her daughter, about six or seven years of age, I presented with half a sovereign, and she flew with it at once to her mother, who made pantomimic signals for her to restore it. I did not take it back; and the last words I heard the kind soul utter were probably her only stock of English—“*Too mooch! too mooch!*”

The first eight or ten miles was travelled over gaily by my steeds; but soon the sun grew powerfully warm, and water, which we failed to find, was evidently needful.

Winding along, at a slackened pace, around the edges of numerous rock-covered kloofs and ravines, suddenly a noble view presented itself. It was a valley, twenty-five miles in width, for the opposite hills were scarcely discernible. I could

scarcely help exclaiming to myself, "If this were well-watered, it might be the great granary for half the people in England!" But only one stream flows through it, and I strongly surmise that in some portions of the year that is quite dry.

After some search, and following the spoor of a quantity of oxen, I found a good pool of water.

While resting I requested the after-rider to point out Mahoshe. He called my attention to a gap in the hill.

"The station is just through there," he said.

"My God!" I exclaimed, "have we to go that far to-night?"

We got to the gap, which was a rugged kloof, and giant timber clothed its sides.

None of your trees of yesterday's growth, but veritable monarchs of the forest, gnarled and twisted, veterans who had fought the battles with storm, rain, and hail from time immemorial. Talk of Burnham oaks and beeches! Speak of the auld, auld trees of Cadzo Forest! None of them have more strange fantastic forms than those I beheld in the fading light now rapidly quickening into deep gloom, from the precipitous rocks and cliffs that formed the edge of the kloof shutting out the last vestiges of the daylight long before its time.

Onwards we pressed through this corrie. Deeper and deeper became the shadows, until all seemed to be blended in one gigantic mass of opaque darkness.

The trail was rough, even more than that, almost a jumble of boulders of every size and shape; yet still no end appeared to this dismal path.

The sundry night animals and nocturnal birds commenced to express their delight that the day was over, and that the time was come in which their deeds of ill would be unobserved.

The only sound that brought relief to my mind—for remember, reader, that I was weak, and still a sufferer from fever—was the deep-toned, honest bark of some sentry baboon up in the crags over my head.

Five miles, at least, we traversed in this gloomy ravine, doubtless grand and sublime by daylight, but at night it might be the entrance to Hades. Then once more we came upon the plain.

In half an hour we were among fields of Kaffir corn, but as yet no signs of the station appeared.

At length the boy points out against the sky five huge peaks, one almost as steep as the monument, or Cleopatra's needle, which looked like the work of the Titans, so stupendous are they in structure.

“But where is the station?”

“Here it should be, my master. This is where Sycheley once lived, and it was then called Kolo-beng.”

In the gloom he pointed out the ruins of a house.

"That's where Dr. Livingstone once lived, but the Boers burnt it down."

It was a grim monument to the memory of a son of my country whom the nation has loved to honour!

We had to dismount. My boy in front led the horses. I, following in the rear, held on to Tommy's tail, for I was a long way from being firm upon my legs. A sorry lot I felt, and I heard the night-bird's shrill ill-omened cry, as though jeering at the solitary white man, who believed he could traverse the wilds of Africa without change of clothes, and without carrying food; for I take this opportunity to mention that I never changed my habiliments from the time I left Maritzburg until I returned to it. Why should such be the case, may be asked? The answer is simply I could not carry more than was actually upon my back.

At length a twinkling light is detected. It marks a cattle kraal.

Long we tried to bargain for one of the people to show us the station.

One, two, three, up to ten shillings was offered, and then even to a pound. Nobody seemed to care for the money, or perhaps they dreaded the indignation of their chief.

At length the Hottentot asked if a white man lived there. There was one.

"Then take us to him."

Sulkily, and with every indication that our

guide disliked the stranger and the task, he walked slowly in front, muttering all the time to himself what doubtless were curses and anathemas against the employment so obviously distasteful to him.

How slowly the miles dragged on the reader will scarcely be able to imagine; but when he is aware that every step was painful in the highest degree, and that a few more may probably bring me to a permanent halt, some idea, although a trifling one, can be formed.

The bless-horse here gave out, and resisted going further, although dragged along by main force and shoved. He staggered like a drunken man, several times swaying so far to the right and left, that it appeared as if he must have fallen. There was nothing for it but to leave him, so I carefully knee-haltered him myself, and resumed my forward progress.

It must have been midnight, for a silver thread of moon had gained considerable elevation, the first glimpse of which I deemed a good omen; and, after the manner of superstitious people, turned over the loose coins I had in my pocket, to induce that fickle jade Fortune not yet to desert me.

When we came in front of a large circular house, built in the shape of a Bechuana hut, under the protecting shadow of a big banyan-tree, the sulky guide stopped and pointed to it.

His *douceur* was faithfully administered, and he bounded away into the surrounding darkness.

I knocked at the door, and it was opened. A

grey-haired, elderly man bade me enter, and to my astonishment recognized me.

In former years he had been an elephant hunter, and I had met him on the lower waters of the Limpopo. To say I was welcome is not a strong enough expression. He placed his house and all its belongings at my disposal, and this is by no means a form of speech, as when heard in Spain, but intended to be taken literally.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AN ESCAPE.

THE first thing in the morning the Hottentot was despatched to announce my arrival. When my host heard me give him his instructions, he told me he feared I had reached a nest of hornets, and only hoped I should be able to get out of it in safety.

Soon after a Boer waggon arrived. It was the property of the man I had assisted a couple of weeks before on my journey up the country. He expressed great delight at having a chance to renew my acquaintance.

My servant returned, after an absence of about an hour.

He had been severely catechised and threatened for daring to show me the way to this station. He had seen the chief at his own village, and therefore knew him.

To his surprise a stranger was pointed out to him as "King," while behind him lay the monarch himself enveloped in a carosse, his head so covered up in its folds as to make recognition almost impossible.

However, when argument and language waxed high, the disguised chief forgot his discretion, and thoughtlessly raised himself from his recumbent position, when the imposture was immediately discovered.

The Hottentot had sufficient diplomacy, however, not to indicate that he saw through the deception that had been practised.

While this interview was going on, several strangers entered the kotla, but not before they were also recognized as a party of rebels who had openly defied our Government in Griqualand West.

"These men will wait for you, and your life will be no more in their hands than that of a dog's," said my after-rider at the end of his account.

However, I interviewed the chief twice, and when I discovered that he had no objection to displaying his hostility to myself and nation, I without hesitation told him what the result would be.

With an assumption of braggadocio, he would like to be informed by what right I entered his country, and told me that he had only to raise his hand, when a hundred assegais would assure my quitting it on the spot.

"If you raise your hand, or attempt to make any gesture, your death will be on your own shoulders," said I, calmly producing my revolver. Then I left him in a towering passion, and quietly went down to the house of my host.

The second interview was less angry, and there was a semblance of a disposition to pacify me in his manner of address.

Placing little stress upon the question, he inquired, as though casually, by what route I intended proceeding after leaving his town. I told him by Asphoe-kloop and Fountian. This was no untruth, for such was my intention.

The next morning the Boer told me that I was to be waylaid upon the road, and he obtained this information from one of his people, who happened to be a native of the place.

I told my host what I had learnt, and he agreed with me that my position was eminently hazardous.

After a short consultation he spoke as follows:—

“They will never do such a thing near the village, but fifteen or twenty miles from here, where there will be no one to know what takes place. A course remains open, however, which you can adopt, but one which will necessitate an alteration in your plans.

“Ride through the kotla as if you intended to carry out your original intention; salute the king as you pass him. You will reach a road half a mile further on which leads directly west, and passes through a kloof at the end of that hill. From here you can see where the gap is,” said he, pointing to it; “it is barely more than a trail made by the women when they bring in wood and water. After you have traversed it, this trail

even disappears ; but if you keep travelling due west, with the sun on your right hand at mid-day, and in your face towards evening, you cannot fail to find the hills on which Karnia stands, probably on the middle of the second day.

"Don't say a word to your Hottentot, for I doubt his sincerity ; keep your intention to yourself, and should he refuse to follow you, shoot him down without hesitation. If you have recourse to this step, stick the muzzle of your rifle into the sand, and then fire it ; it will burst it half-way from the breech, so if you have to leave it behind it will be useless to any one.

"To possess such a rifle as that they would take any man's life. They may attempt to overhaul you, but they have not got a horse within miles of the station ; and with ordinary luck, before any can be brought in, you can have placed such a distance between yourself and your foes, that you will have little fear of danger to entertain. If the worst comes to the worst, and your horses break down, turn up one of the adjoining hills, and hide among the rocks ; with a pair of revolvers, and your knowledge of their use, I would back you against two dozen of such scoundrels."

I saw my girths carefully tightened, and paid unusual attention to all my accoutrements. I replaced my old cartridges with new ones, and made the smallest possible roll of my blankets, fastening them taut with a fresh rheim to the cantle of the

saddle. My great-coat I made into a neat roll, and secured it to the tree. When, having seen my servant mounted, I bid my friend and the Boer good-bye.

Slowly I rode through the kotla.

There was the chief, with all his minions, assembled. I touched my cap and quietly said a word of farewell; then, unhurriedly, rode through the station.

When I reached the turning-place, my follower, who was close at my heels, called,—

“Baas! you are going wrong!”

I checked my horses, and told him firmly that that was the route I intended to take.

He hesitated. It might have been the result of his ignorance of the course. It might have been treachery.

I did not wait to consider which, but simply said, “Follow me. If you do not, you must take the consequence,” and I unbuttoned my holster.

I believe the lad was faithful; and if my previous suspicions do him an injustice, I am sorry; only, my life depended upon the issue, and therefore my language was, of necessity, rather explicit than courteous.

He remained close at my heels without a moment of hesitation, and I jammed my spurs into Tommy; and at a good swinging canter we went at least ten or eleven miles in the first hour.

Here we found water, of which the nags were

permitted to take two or three mouthfuls, when the pace, in a slightly modified form, was again resumed.

Lovelier valleys I never saw. The timber was beautiful, and the grasses grew in the wildest profusion; yet not a single being or a head of cattle was discernible. Even the game seemed to have deserted the place, and although the surroundings were so eminently bright and pleasing, yet still the intense silence was oppressive almost to painfulness.

At three or four o'clock in the afternoon, I felt convinced that I sighted the Kania mountains in the distance. This range is scarcely to be mistaken, for upwards of ten miles it stretches in as direct a line as the surface of one of the prairies in Illinois, but at its termination it descends to the level of the surrounding country in three distinctly marked steps. At this point the Tottic told me I was going wrong, and thereupon pointed out an old waggon-spoor, which instead of leading westward, pointed due south. I followed it for three miles, until I got into a jumble of rock and stone, that appeared to bar further progress.

I had taken the advice of my attendant in making the *détour* which led me here, so once more I began to doubt his good faith.

I only said a few words to him; retrace the last three miles I had come, I would not.

“ Kania is over there, so I shall ride right over these hills.”

He protested earnestly that no horse in the world could do it, and I replied, "You will see if I cannot, and what is more, you shall follow me."

So I turned up the steep acclivity of stone and a network of thorns. I insisted upon his keeping close up behind me.

After a couple of hours of most fatiguing work, I dismounted to rest the beasts, exclaiming to myself, "If these bloodhounds are after me, they cannot spoor me over the last hour's ride."

Near sunset I came to a beautiful valley, which I followed for several miles.

Here the horses were knee-haltered, and allowed to feed until near midnight, I remaining their custodian during the whole time, my servant being ordered to make a fire on the hillside, that I might know his position when I wished to return.

I got a few hours' rest, and at break of day was once more in the saddle.

That night, after dark, I was in the station of Kania.

CHAPTER XL.

A KIND KAFFIR.

OLD HASHESHEBA was delighted to see me again, and appeared to look upon me as one risen from the dead. The natives had brought him word of my reception at Sycheley's, and he had also learnt of the boast his young men had made, that if I had not taken my departure so hurriedly, they would have made a sure termination to my further journey.

From there he was aware every day led me into a more inimical country, where, if disaster befell me, it was more than improbable that any of the details connected with it would transpire.

The poor old gentleman was not without his own troubles, for he had discovered that a band of freebooters were on his western frontier, who premeditated making an attack upon his cattle kraals, and carrying off all the stock they could capture to distant Damaraland. These men were partisans and allies of Lucker and Solomon, well-known leaders of the rebellious faction which had

caused Colonel Warren and Mr. Bethel so much trouble in Griqualand.

The morning after my arrival at Kania, I witnessed two regiments of about eight hundred men, departing for the protection of his own frontier, so when he told me that he regretted he could not spare any people, I had no hesitation in believing his assertion.

The kindness of Hashesheba did not terminate here. After my horses were rested, he had them driven on to his most southern cattle-post, a distance of fifty miles, there to be kept until my arrival. Two days later I started, provided with horses of his own, and an escort to take care of me until I had traversed the dangerous part of his territory.

On the fourth morning, soon after sunrise, I bid him adieu, and accompanied by three young chiefs, all well mounted, we scampered over the adjoining flats, and at noon I gladly recognized my quadrupeds, under the care of some of his cattle-herds, grazing in a meadow of fine sweet grass under Massoolikatse Koppie.

Soon I was once more on their back, when I parted, not without regret, from the good and faithful young men who had been made answerable for my safety.

About ten o'clock at night, tired, weary, and feeling anything but well, I entered the precincts of Moyloes. Here I came across a trader, who sold me a bottle of bitter beer for seven and six-

pence, and a nearer approach to nectar I never conceived.

I remained at Mr. Jansen's for three days, where I learnt of the termination of the Zulu War, and thus made no further efforts to obtain people, in fact, as things turned out, it was most fortunate for the Government that such was the case, for if eight hundred or a thousand Bechuanas had been assembled here, their pay and food would have cost *at least* twenty times the outlay expended upon my journey.

The white pony and bay horse which I had left behind, I found to be in rather a pitiable condition; the former had recovered from its lameness, but the latter was the veriest scarecrow I think I ever looked at.

As they were not "*saulted*," I determined to take them further south, and accept the first sum offered approximating to their value.

The bless-horse, being *saulted*, I left in the missionary's charge, to be disposed of, and the purchase-money accredited to the army pay department. The Hottentot, whose home was about twenty miles north of here, refused to accompany me any further; and although I offered fabulous sums to obtain an attendant, I failed to do so. Thus, at noon, the reader might have seen me commence a journey of nearly seven hundred miles mounted on Tommy, and leading Bob; while a boy, lent me for a day or two, followed driving the other beasts.

I was sorely overweighted, having to carry my rifle, bandolier, revolvers, and all my paraphernalia upon my person ; but speed no longer being so absolutely necessary, I determined to make the effort, hoping that at some village on my route, I might come across a waif who might wish to go to the coast.

The first night I reached my friend Mr. Taylor's, to whom I disposed of the unfortunate garrons.

The next night I slept at Jacobsdahl, where I learnt for the first time that the Transvaal was in a most unsettled state ; and that some Boers had broken into the prison at Yeerust, where, in spite of the remonstrances of the representative of British authority, they had released several of their countrymen that had been incarcerated for grave and serious offences. Here I was received as one who had been totally given up for lost, for rumours are rapidly carried about by the native population, and when disseminated, soon reach the ears of white residents.

From there I rode to Lichtenberg, and on the second evening, after losing myself on the veldt for eight or ten hours, riding through a morass of water, almost deep enough to make the horses swim, and getting a cropper over a dry sun-crack in the dark, I found myself in that rising village, where I was detained for two days by an uninterrupted downpour of rain.

Centresdorp was my next resting-place. I did

not reach it until well on in the night, for I had again lost myself, waggon trails having become numerous; and it being difficult for a stranger, in consequence, to distinguish which is the right one.

Here the Boers were exceedingly bitter against me as an emissary of the Government; one nearly forcing me into a fight, but afterwards thinking better of it.

On the second day I rode into Pourchestroom, where a hospitable host, a good hotel, and capital stabling; with that essential, a good tub, made me feel eminently comfortable.

Here I was not free from annoyance, for my horses requiring to be shod, Tommy was returned from the blacksmith's, pricked, and consequently dead lame. I, at once, rushed to the Land-drost for redress, and explained to him that as the animals were Government property, I thought he had the power to deal summarily with the aggressor. However, he had no similar case as a precedent, and so hesitated to act hastily, much as he was anxious to do all in his power for any servant of the Crown.

I could have cried with grief at this misfortune; so, as the law would not help me, I resolved to take the matter into my own hands. I was, however, dissuaded against taking such a course; probably a happy circumstance for me, since I had not strength remaining in me to fight a twelve-year-old schoolboy.

At one time I feared I should have had to leave my pet behind. To do so would have caused me great pain, but I did not dare waste weeks here, as the authorities might not consider such a course justifiable. So, as a last resource, I had his shoe taken off, discovered the wound, and had it plastered up with pitch; and to my great joy, found, that although he limped a little, it was still possible for him to go on if led.

Even here I could not obtain an attendant, and I certainly disliked having to travel over the interminable flats between this and the Vaal river, and between the Vaal river and Natal, without having some one with me knowing the roads, and who could, in case I broke down, take care of me.

Bidding a kind farewell to my good friend the Land-drost, I left Pourchestroom about nine o'clock in the morning, and after traversing the ford on the pretty Mooi river, turned to the eastward, hoping to be able to retrace my steps by the route I had come.

It was a close, sultry day, with the sun excessively overpowering; thus I was compelled to moderate my speed to no greater pace than four miles an hour.

Somehow or other I missed taking a turn to the left, which I should have followed, to enable me to reach Friedelford, and did not discover my error until I had ridden ten or twelve miles in the wrong direction.

I could not think of returning, but resolved to make for the town of Parish, a place in the Free State rapidly becoming of considerable importance.

At about this time I became conscious of a strange giddiness in my head, and frequently felt it extremely difficult to retain my seat in the saddle. I struggled and fought against it; but all was of no avail, so I turned off the path, and seated myself under a tree with a hope to obtain relief.

This was when the sun was yet an hour high I remember nothing more until after midnight, for such I judged the hour to be, from the elevation of the moon.

On either side of me stood my horses, almost breathing upon my face; neither appeared to have stirred an inch since the moment I became unconscious. I had not strength to mount.

Holding by Bob's mane, I managed to stagger along. In an hour I reached a Kaffir kraal; and an old man came out when he heard my summons, at the first glance he seemed to recognize that I was sick.

He took the horses from my hand, led me gently into his hut, where I remained in a kind of stupor; although knowing all that passed around me, still I was quite incapable of any exertion.

This old fellow was very attentive, bringing me a gourd full of water, which he placed by my side, and by sunrise I was sufficiently recovered to

come forth into the open air. My horses had been well attended to, so I resolved to resume my march as soon as the day got a little older.

A Boer rode by at this moment. The old native called him up, and explained my ailment. I knew enough to understand what was said. It was laconic, but expressive.

“*He* would not give a pipe of tobacco to save the life of any blasted Englishman that ever was born.”

CHAPTER XLI.

NEARLY DROWNED.

As may be supposed, I was not in a very fit state for travelling; however, with much difficulty, and the assistance of the old Kaffir, I mounted Bob, and leisurely pursued my way.

I had taken large quantities of quinine in the morning, which, although it affords me great relief, frequently produces a buzzing in my ears, and further appears to quicken my memory, and call back days of the past.

The surrounding scenery was exceedingly beautiful; rock-sided koppies on either hand being covered, in many parts, with green and attractive trees.

These beauties of nature, to which I should have paid the greatest attention under ordinary circumstances, were to-day treated cavalierly, I fear, for my thoughts were of home, the days of my youth, and my early experiences in my profession.

The face of one dark southern beauty, in all the glorious radiance of youth, and possessed of

those almond-shaped languishing eyes whose glances appear to appeal to man's sympathy and love, stands as vividly before me as she did the day I led her to the altar.

A heavy stumble of my horse brought me back to the realities of the present, when I found I had just entered a kloof, so rugged along the road that I deemed it desirable to dismount and lead the way; for know, reader, that my horses love me sufficiently to follow without being led.

I might have passed over a quarter of a mile, and the valley commenced to open, as if to indicate that we should soon enter a more level country, when a figure, dressed in the usual Boer costume, and wearing a slouch hat, rose unexpectedly from among a jumble of rocks over a hundred yards off.

At this juncture I was exactly abreast of his position, and although looking at him, had not the very slightest idea he intended me evil.

In his hands was a gun, and to my astonishment he deliberately aimed it at me.

I cannot say what possessed me; I might have taken shelter behind a rock, thrown myself upon the ground, or let the horses come between us, but they, poor animals, taking no notice of my halt, passed on.

This little circumstance appeared to disarrange my foe's aim; but when they had left me behind them, I stood still, facing him.

He again raised his weapon, and fired.

The bullet fell short, ricocheted off the ground, and struck me above the ankle.

I felt no pain, only a numbed senseless feeling.

My first idea was to run up the rocks after him, but strength failed me.

I then drew my revolver, but at a hundred yards it appeared useless to discharge it.

Still, giving the weapon an elevation over my enemy's head, I fired.

The bullet hit almost at his feet. Judging that there was danger in his position, he took shelter behind a boulder, and rapidly began to load his gun, which, fortunately for me, was a muzzle-loader.

This little contretemps seemed to recall my energy, and to cause me to cease to wish to prolong a conflict in which I was placed at such an immeasurable disadvantage; so I walked sharply forward, reached Bob, and the ground being suitable for my mounting, without any very extraordinary effort I regained the saddle. Thus, ere the fellow was able to take a second shot, nearly two hundred yards separated us, and his bullet fell short of my position.

Bad gunpowder, in my opinion, saved my life, for the projectiles aimed at me seemed to lack velocity, while the report was so dead and rumbling, as to indicate that the ignition was slow and uncertain.

After traversing several more kloofs, all

situated between rolling hills, and provided with streams of water of about the size in Scotland designated "burns," a fine wide valley lay in front of me, and through its centre about two miles distant, was a broad silvery line. It was the long wished for Vaal river.

By some means or other I lost the path, and made directly for the stream. On its margin I came to two comfortable cottages. In front of one sat an elderly man, making a rimkey, or possibly a lash for his waggon whip. I asked him to direct me to the ford. This he did not seem to comprehend. At length a dirty, grimy-looking, unwashed damsel made her appearance.

My question was equally unintelligible to her. As a last resource, I exclaimed, "Parish," the name of the village I wished to reach. Both waved their hands to the westward, so I proceeded in that direction.

For over two miles I could not perceive any indication of where either cattle or waggons had crossed the river.

By-and-by, opposite me, on the other bank, I came abreast of two more houses, around which grew a quantity of aloes, peach, and orange-trees. Beside an unyoked waggon in the immediate vicinity were several persons. The stream was too broad for my voice to reach them, so I rode further down, at length being rewarded with a sight of the indentation made by wheels entering the water.

The appearance of the river here is picturesque in the extreme. Its breadth is about that of the Thames at Kew, but through its entire width large boulders stick up, many of them several feet above the level of the water. Taking hold of Tommy's halter I made it fast to the tree of my saddle, to insure his coming over with his companion—not a very wise course, as will afterwards be seen.

Never was there a rougher bottom to a river in my experience, not even those in Bonnie Scotland could be worse; in fact, I doubt if it had been dry land instead of water whether I, or any sane man, would have attempted to ride over such ground. However, by dint of spurs and bit, I gained the middle in safety, where the water considerably shoaled, and there took a respite. Soon I was three-fourths of the way across, and was congratulating myself on the probability of accomplishing the transit with success, when the horse I bestrode made a plunge forward (a gallant effort to save itself), and then came down on his flank, pulling Tommy on the top of him.

I got away from the beast as fast as possible, and struggled for the shore. I had good fifty yards to go before reaching it, sometimes up to my knees, at others to my waist in water, and in several places compelled to swim a few strokes. However, I came out none the worse for the misfortune.

All this time I was in a fearful state of suspense



A Dangerous and Unpleasant Position

in case the reins should get round the horses' feet; but luckily they did not, and I had the satisfaction to see both my animals land about thirty paces down stream. Each of them seemed considerably frightened, and snorted loudly, as though to express their satisfaction on regaining *terra firma*.

Lamentable as was the accident, and depressed as were my feelings, I could not help smiling at the quantity of water that came surging out of my blanket-rolls and greatcoat. This happened under the eyes of the Boers, yet not one came to help me.

I went to one of their houses, in the hope of being permitted to put myself into a little better plight for travelling, but the surly brutes turned away; so I thought I would go on until I reached some sequestered place where I could wring out my clothes and bedding.

At last I found a desirable spot for this purpose, when I came across a waggon. From the driver I asked the way to Parish, for I deemed I could not be far from that place.

He pointed out a trail south-west, which I followed for an hour and a half, and then found myself upon the open veldt, with no vestige of habitation near.

Some miles to the north I could mark the course of the Vaal River from the trees and shrubs that deck its banks, and I knew that this town was on its margin, so I turned off again, and after riding for about two hours, observed a

couple of waggon's converging on to one point from different directions. I made for the apex of the angle at which I anticipated their meeting, and hit off a road well worn by traffic.

Soon after I entered Parish.

There was but one store in the place, where I fortunately obtained food for my horses, and a box of sardines and some American biscuits, but none would grant me a place of shelter.

However, for the sum of ten pounds I was enabled to obtain a trap to take me to Hielbron, the distance being about eighty miles. The driver was a remarkably decent man, an old colonist by birth, but long a resident amongst the Boers, whom he hated most thoroughly, at least the *male* population. My horses were led, and the journey took us three days to perform.

One night we got shelter at an old farmer's called Peterman.

This old Dane I took quite a fancy to, and I think he did to me, for he produced a bottle of *smoke* (Cape brandy) and an unlimited supply of tobacco, both a God-send, more particularly the latter, for the small amount of it I possessed, as well as my papers, had got destroyed in my ducking whilst fording the Vaal.

This gentleman was owner of a curiosity; it was a troop of forty-six wildebeest. They always came home to the cattle kraal at night; or, if anyone happened to be shooting on the veldt, at the first report of a gun they heard, they would at

once stampede for the shelter of their owner's house.

They might be introduced into England. They are very hardy, and would look exceedingly novel and picturesque in the park of a nobleman. I may add, that they are, as the Americans say, "the most comical critturs" on the face of the earth.

It is unquestionably true, although many may doubt the assertion, that these animals have maggots in a small sack close to the brain, which circumstance may account for the eccentricity of their movements.

At every farmhouse my driver halted, his excuse being that his horses required it; but it always struck me that he paid more attention to the ladies of each establishment than he did to the wants of his quadrupeds.

At sunset we reached Hielbron.

I slept at what by courtesy is denominated an hotel, which, however, was more accommodated to my feelings than old Mr. Peterman's, for there the whole family, strangers and all, slept in *one room on the floor!*

From Hielbron I rode to Mr. Powell's. Next day to Limoney Vley, and the third brought me to Mrs. Chandos, the wife of an old non-commissioned officer of the Cape Mounted Rifles.

Her only children are two daughters, both of whom are pretty, and who did all that lay in their power to make me comfortable in their primitive dwelling.

Next night I passed at Eland River, where poor Bob broke down (*vide* report in Appendix), and the following evening found me at Harrysmith.

Gallant Tommy carried me well over the Drachenberg before he halted. His brave heart might have made him go further, but I feared it would kill him; and thank God he reached Maritzburg two days after myself.

My success in getting thus far I owe to my faithful horses, to whose endurance and docility I give full credit for accomplishing my most arduous and trying journey.

On arrival at Doeg's Hotel I required a fresh animal to take me to the General's headquarters to report myself. The proprietor offered me the use of General Newdigate's well-known charger "Emperor," a noble old fellow. As I was about to mount, Mr. Doeg informed me that he had some letters for me, and the first I opened was from my dear old mother.

It announced the death of her who became my wife twenty-five years ago.

Weary and tired, broken down and travel-stained, this was one more blow to bring me lower still, and to crush the heart of the worn-out traveller.

CHAPTER XLII.

CONCLUSION.

THE war being over, and Cetawayo captured, my services are no longer required, so I proceed to Durban to take ship for home once more.

The "Roman" is in the offing, but does not sail for two days. This interval I employ in endeavouring to find my baggage, which was left here before I started. Here I am informed that it was sent to Maritzburg. At Maritzburg I was told that it had never been sent from Durban. Such contradictory information causes me at once to conclude that I shall not succeed in recovering my lost property. I soon found that I was not the only sufferer, for the majority of the officers who came home in the vessel with me had a similar grievance to complain of. This should not have been the case. It is quite bad enough to put up with the inconveniences one is called upon to endure in the field, without being deprived of the comfort of a change of clothes, if spared to return from active service.

Moreover, few can afford to lose, say forty or

fifty pounds' worth of clothes, particularly when Government refuses all recompense for casualties of this description.

When once on board the "Roman" I could not help feeling thankful, since the short journey to her from Durban Point was fraught with no little danger.

The sea that day on the bar happened to be exceedingly heavy; but the tug-boat was equal to the occasion, being well found and fitted for such precarious service.

This, nevertheless, did not prevent her from shipping a considerable quantity of water, and all on board getting thoroughly soaked.

The old "Roman" I had known by sight for many a day. She is as staunch and strong a ship as ever was rivetted together, and has in her lifetime encountered no end of gales that would have destroyed less strongly-constructed vessels.

I can never forget the kindness I experienced at the hands of the captain and officers, the moment I passed over the gangway. One and all were willing to do anything for their countrymen, even to fitting them out with clothing from head to foot; while the stewards, equally considerate, almost appealed to the new arrivals to employ them in gratifying the wants of the inner man. It was originally intended to sail at ten o'clock the next morning, for the despatches were expected to be on board by that time, announcing the capture of Cetewayo. These valuable documents

were entrusted to the care of Lord Gifford ; but red-tapeism, or necessity, prevented his arrival until late in the afternoon.

In other ships, with the heavy sea rolling in which we were anchored, we might have endured much discomfort ; but not so on board the present craft, for she rode so easily that even the most fastidious could not complain. At length the look-out proclaims the arrival of the tow-boat. All rush to the bulwarks to welcome her approach. The seething bar is crossed by the little steamer, and ten minutes later she is alongside.

The despatches are rapidly hoisted on board, a few more passengers are added to our numbers, the steam whistle belches forth its bass notes, the capstan turns rapidly, the screw slowly but surely revolves, our head is brought round to the eastward, and we commence passing over the first mile of the nearly eight thousand knot journey lying before us.

The majority on board are military men, all looking more or less stained and weather-beaten, while the costume of each indicates the hardness of the labours performed by its tenant. At first we are not very sociable, but this may be readily accounted for by the circumstance that nearly all are invalids. We have, however, several ladies on board, and they, with welcome smiles and kind words, do much to break down the barrier that exists between strangers.

The " Roman " has lately come from Zanzibar,

the result of visiting that port being that we have quite a menagerie with us.

It would have done the heart of dear old Blyth, late curator of the Calcutta museum, to have inspected it. There are Madagascar cats in numbers, with other kind of lemurs, monkeys of several different species, meer-kats and mungoses, goats and sheep that have a scriptural appearance, with Zebu bullocks of the smallest size. These were nearly all the property of half a dozen passengers; and to have noted the extreme kindness with which they were fondled and cared for by the sailors, would prove what good hearts these seafaring men possess.

The antics of some of the animals became a constant source of amusement. One or other was frequently getting loose, when a chevy would be made from the forecastle to recover the truant. I often thought that these little escapades were got up by the officers, on purpose to amuse the depressed in spirit; if so, the idea was well conceived, for the most weary and worn out among us invariably laughed at the episode. Our good ship speeds to the southward, the sea becomes smoother, until its surface is almost as brilliant and unruffled as that of a mill-pond.

Although the “Roman” has been some months from home her table is excellent, and the charges for wines, &c., are surprisingly low.

In two days we are trans-shipped to the “Danube” at Algoa Bay, when all of us regret

parting with the "Roman;" yet after we gained a more perfect knowledge of our new home, we found that here too our comforts were to be equally attended to. This is also a very fine ship, although not to be placed in comparison with several of this (The Union) company's later-built craft; ship-building, I suppose, like every art, becoming more perfect day by day.

At Mossell Bay we passed the "Durban," a noble vessel belonging to this line. She is reported to be a splendid sea-ship, but the "Arab" and "Pretoria" have made the fastest passages on record.

Next morning, Sunday, we run into Capetown, where none regret having the opportunity to take exercise on shore. Two days delay here ensues, and again we are ploughing the briny deep. No person acquainted with sea travel, can fail to observe the perfect discipline that prevails on board, one which gives the least-experienced and timid of voyagers that confidence which makes an ocean journey a supreme luxury. In twenty-two days we are warped along the Southampton dock, when, without a dissentient mind, every passenger feels grateful to Captain Griffin and his crew, for their courtesy and attention during the long voyage we have just accomplished.

Travelling alone, as a Government official, the difficulties I had to contend with in the Transvaal and the countries beyond, may well be imagined from the opposition that so great and deservedly-

Pay of after-rider, 5*l.* a month, with rations.

In lieu of rations for self and horses, Mr. Gillmore will receive travelling allowances at the rate of 1*l.* a day. This allowance will include the expenses of the after-rider and forage.

Mr. Gillmore will be provided with two horses for himself and two horses for his after-rider.

Mr. Gillmore engages to proceed to the South-West Frontier of the Transvaal and the adjoining country, and to hire drivers and leaders to serve during the war against the Zulus on the following terms.

The pay of the drivers and leaders and their conditions of service to be the same as those men at present serving in Natal, as laid down in District order dated 3rd May, '79.

(Copy attached.)

The men engaged by Mr. Gillmore will receive rations until their arrival at Ladysmith in Natal, but no pay.

Pay will commence from the date of their arrival at Ladysmith.

The drivers and leaders will be engaged to serve until the expiration of the war against the Zulus, when they will receive a gratuity of half a month's pay each, and will be sent back under Mr. Gillmore, or some other responsible person, to the place from which they started.

The Staff Paymaster will arrange to supply Mr. Gillmore with an imprest of 500*l.* to purchase meat and grain for the drivers and leaders on the journey to Natal, and such imprest to be afterwards duly accounted for by Mr. Gillmore.

One pack ox will be required for every twelve men to carry their baggage and cooking-pots. These oxen will be purchased by Mr. Gillmore at a cost not exceeding 12*l.* a-piece, and will be handed over to the Commissariat Department on arriving in Natal.

Should Mr. Gillmore, after engaging a portion of the natives required, find it necessary to proceed further north to obtain the remainder, he will hire the services of a competent civilian at 10*s.* a day, and will send the

first portion of the men down to Ladysmith under his charge.

Signed on behalf of

H.M. Secretary of State for War,

(Signed) E. STRICKLAND,
Commissary General.

(Signed) PARKER GILLMORE,
Late Lieut. 1st Foot.

Witness : (Signed) W. D. Richardson.

True copy of agreement between Capt. Parker Gillmore and the Government.

(Signed) ARTHUR ALLEN OWEN, Bt. Lt.-Col. 88th Regt.,
President of the Board.

ORDERS.—INSPECTOR-GENERAL LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND BASE.

Head Quarters,
Pietermaritzburg, Natal, *3rd May*, 1879.

1. Organization of Drivers and Leaders.

They will be divided into two classes :

1st Class.—Drivers in the field at 5*l.* per month ;
leaders in the field at 2*l.* 10*s.* per month, and arms and
ammunition.

This class to include every man that crosses into Zululand with the troops. Pay to reckon from date of entering the enemy's country.

2nd Class.—Drivers in the colony at 3*l.* 10*s.* per month ;
leaders in the colony at 30*s.* per month.

The usual rations will be given to both classes.

Every man on engagement will be furnished with a pay certificate-book, in which his name, tribe, and description, and a number which is to be given him, is to be written, and his rate of pay shown.

Arms and ammunition are to be given to each driver and leader on entering the enemy's country, and the number and description of arms and number of rounds of ammunition handed over to him should also be entered

in his pay certificate book; and the arms and ammunition given to the drivers and leaders must be inspected by the conductor once every other day, and the number of arms with each convoy is to be always entered on the convoy note.

All natives to be encouraged to take their assegais with them on the line of march.

Officers in charge of transport must make earnest and constant efforts to prevent drivers and leaders being beaten or ill-treated, or the slightest injustice being done to them. Natives will work well enough, though perhaps slowly, yet with fidelity and intelligence, if they are treated with firmness and justice, but always kindly.

It is only by such treatment that we can ever hope to enlist them in our cause, and induce them voluntarily to serve us. Compulsory labour is an impossibility, simply because even a special sentry over each man would not suffice to prevent his deserting if he wishes to do so. It is therefore incumbent on us to make our service acceptable in their eyes by extending to them increased protection, by showing them that we are glad to take an interest in them, and that we are willing to pay punctually for their labour. It must, however, be clearly understood that all drivers and leaders serve under the provisions of the Mutiny Act, so far as relates to maintenance of proper discipline, and that acts of disobedience and other crimes will be dealt with by proper authority under the above-named Act.

Nominal lists of any drivers and leaders who desert will be furnished by the Transport Officer to the Director of Transport, who will report to the Secretary of Native Affairs, in order that they may be traced to their homes and punished.

In future the substance of this memorandum will be explained to each man when engaged, and every effort will be made to instil into their minds a feeling of security for themselves, and a spirit of confidence in their employers.

It will be the duty of officers to exercise careful super-

vision over their conductors, and any conductors found guilty, in dealing with natives, of conduct against either the letter or spirit of these instructions, should be immediately punished by fine, or dismissed if necessary.

All such cases should be reported at once to the senior Transport Officer under whom they are serving; and it will be his duty to bring the matter before the senior military or Commanding Officer of the station or Division.

Conductors have no power to punish a driver or leader, but they must bring any minor offence of which they may be guilty, or any neglect of duty, to the notice of the Transport Officer, to be dealt with by him.

H. H. CLIFFORD, Major-General,
I. G. L. of C. and B.

COPY OF REPORT OF CAPTAIN PARKER GILLMORE TO
MAJOR-GENERAL CLIFFORD, V.C., C.B.

SIR,—In compliance with your instructions forwarded to me by Major Mahony, I beg to say that the horse sold to Mr. Winter for 25*l.* was paid for yesterday, and that I handed the amount by cheque to Major Mahony.

The cart and harness purchased from Mr. Jansen, the missionary at Liniakani, was paid for by cheque on Standard Bank. Having no further use for it, it was left with him for sale, as it was much more valuable there than it would have been further south. I also left with him a "salted" horse, for which I paid 17*l.*; its value also would have depreciated if brought further down country.

I instructed Mr. Jansen to sell both these at the first convenient opportunity, and to forward the amount to me at Pietermaritzburg.

The other two horses, being worn out and unable to travel, were sold by me to Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bowen, the first for 21*l.* 15*s.*, the latter for 12*l.*

This transaction took place at the residence of the

first-mentioned person, about ten miles beyond Zeerust in Marico, Transvaal, and which sums I have credited to the Government in my account.

Another horse I had to leave at Elands River, twenty miles north of Harrysmith, in care of Mr. Landridge, proprietor of the ferry.

With it was one saddle and bridle complete, and three Government blankets, the fourth blanket issued to me having been destroyed by fire.

I instructed Mr. Landridge to send the horse with the accoutrements, &c., &c., to the Commissariat Officer at Harrysmith.

I also informed the Commissariat Officer there of the circumstance, and begged him, if any delay occurred, to forward one of his people for it.

When deprived of the services of an after-rider, I was unable to carry the Enfield rifle and ammunition. This I handed to a respectable merchant of Weston, Natal, who was purchasing cattle in the Transvaal; his receipt for the same, and promise to return to me at Maritzburg, I have handed to Major Mahony.

I beg to enclose you a receipt voucher for the other articles, viz. revolver with holster, saddle and bridle complete.

In conclusion, I might add, on returning the last-mentioned articles to the Ordnance Department, the Storekeeper informed the person I employed to deliver them, that I was not responsible for their safety, and that it was therefore unnecessary for me to return them.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) PARKER GILLMORE,

Late Lieut. 1st Foot, and in
Command of Native Levy, South Africa.

To Major General Clifford, V.C., C.B.,
Inspector General Lines of Communication and Base,
Maritzburg.

